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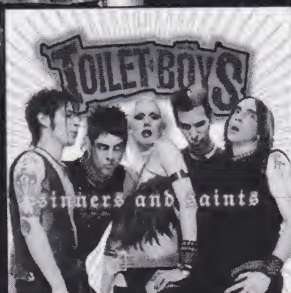
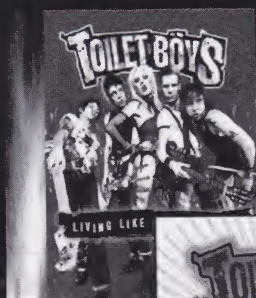
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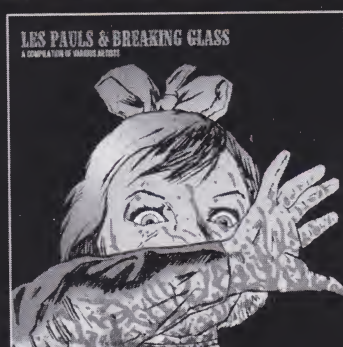
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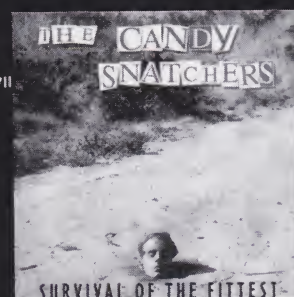


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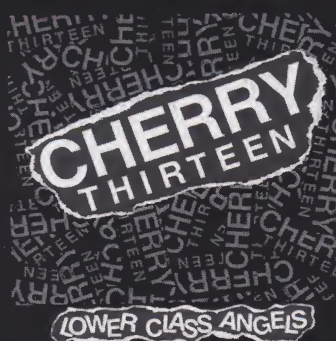
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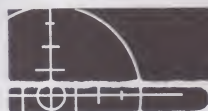


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THE END OF THE RAMONE(S)...

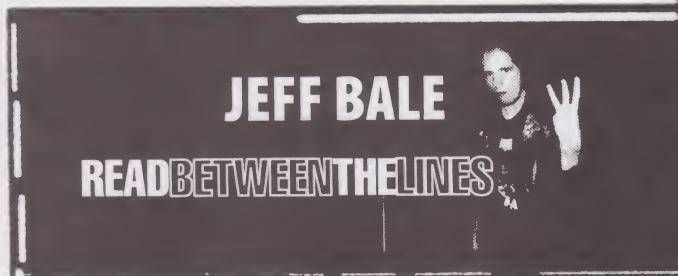
On the evening of the Monday after last Easter Sunday, I received a phone call from Tim Stegall, who was calling to inform me of Joey Ramone's death. It was at once apparent that Tim was visibly shaken and profoundly affected by Joey's sudden demise, and indeed he reacted as if he'd lost a close sibling or a childhood friend. Although I myself was saddened to hear the bad news, at that particular moment it didn't affect me nearly so strongly, in part perhaps because I'm older than Tim and have already experienced the loss of several close friends, including Tim Yohannan (who, like Joey, also died of lymphatic cancer and also died on Easter Sunday. Is lymphoma now replacing drug overdoses as the chief cause of premature "punk" deaths?). It wasn't until a few days later that the magnitude of Joey's death really hit me, not merely because it signified the indisputable termination of the RAMONES' career as a functioning band, but also because it began to seem representative of the death of the entire punk rock underground.

But first, let's begin with Joey. Perhaps never in the history of rock'n'roll has such a seemingly sensitive, shy, and gawky guy become a rock star, if only on a cult level. One can presume that Joey had been the kind of awkward-looking, sensitive kid who had been mercilessly harassed during his grade school and high school years by all the moronic jocks and frat dorks. And like innumerable other alienated "outsiders," then and now, he sought to escape from sheep-like conformist bullies by immersing himself in the comforting fantasy world of rock'n'roll. Yet in the end, as unlikely as it may have seemed at the outset, he managed to hook up with some other local misfits and form one of the most influential bands in the entire history of rock'n'roll. In retrospect the RAMONES' formula for (underground) success is easily discernable: take the most infectious 60's pop melodies from a wide variety of sources — girl groups, the BEACH BOYS, the BEATLES, and the list goes on — and combine them with 60's punk snottiness, satirical lyrics, a breakneck pace, and a slashing buzzsaw guitar attack, something which had never quite been done before. The result was no less than the creation of new type of rock'n'roll — (pop-oriented) punk rock — which was ultimately destined, no doubt to the RAMONES' own great surprise, to spawn a musical revolution and, in the process, help forge a new music-oriented counterculture that spanned the entire globe. The general outlines of this story are by now well-known to everyone familiar with the history of underground r'n'r, so there's no need to go over it all again here.

However, two important points perhaps deserve further emphasis. First of all, the distinctive RAMONES sound would have been utterly unimaginable in the absence of Joey's plaintive, evocative vocals and absurdist sense of humor. (The only other RAMONE who was absolutely irreplaceable was Johnny, who almost single-handedly created the minimalist, roaring guitar sound that has come to symbolize modern punk rock. Dee Dee may have added an appealingly degenerate, out-of-control vibe and his trademark "one-two-fwee-fo" song intros in that inimitable New York dialect, and the drummers have surely all been rock steady, but they could be — and at times were — replaced.) To this day RAMONES songs remain instantly recognizable, and it has to be admitted — since millions of other punk bands have since adopted Johnny's telltale guitar style — that this is due primarily to Joey's peculiar vocal stylings. In that

sense, Joey's death makes it impossible to ever again recreate or reconstitute the RAMONES. Hence his own sad fate truly signifies the "end of the RAMONES" as a band.

Secondly, one of the most appealing things about Joey was that he was the very antithesis of the macho tough guy frontman who has since become so characteristic of certain "bully boy" subgenres of punk, most notably NYC hardcore, straightedge, and some varieties of Oi. And for that we should all be thankful. Joey was a skinny, gangly beanpole who wouldn't have hurt a flea and probably couldn't have punched his way out of a wet paper bag, and was all the more lovable for it. He was just an obsessed fan who



seemed to love rock'n'roll more than anything else in this fucked-up world, and even in the midst of the maelstrom that was the RAMONES' full-throttle attack his sensitive nature and basic decency always shined through. So it was that, several days after Tim Stegall phoned, I spent a whole day listening to those truly essential first four RAMONES albums, and I must admit that I was often moved to tears, especially when playing the beautiful, bittersweet "I Remember You". Despite the hedonism and decadence so characteristic of punk culture, there was always something perversely *innocent-sounding* about the RAMONES, just as there had been in much of the best r'n'r from the 60s. It may come as a shock to some of you wannabe tough guys, but the not-so-sordid truth is that most of the notorious r'n'r "bad boys" from the pre-punk and early punk eras were intelligent, dare I say sensitive people, in contrast to the jock-like cretins that now tend to dominate "mosh pits" at hardcore and rap-metal shows. Joey was certainly cut from this earlier "bad boy" mold, and may have been among the most sensitive of them all. Thus, long after the current wave of ostentatious public eulogizing has passed, I know that I will always feel some sense of loss whenever I hear a RAMONES song or am otherwise reminded of Joey, since he and the rest of the RAMONES indirectly altered the entire course of my life. Even if the resulting redirection of my life ultimately ends up being for the worse, as it now seems like it might, during the period between the mid-70s and the mid-90s I was able to have more fun than any human being has a right to expect.

...AND MUCH ELSE BESIDES

Unfortunately, Joey's death also caused me to deepen my ongoing reflections on the state of the punk scene. And I'm sorry to say that, upon further reflection, I've concluded that our scene is now in the sorriest state it's ever been in. I have no doubt that there will always be a handful of great new punk bands emerging from the rock'n'roll underground, but as a living, vibrant, meaningful counterculture, punk is more than



simply moribund. It's teetering on the brink of outright expiration. In that sense, Joey's personal passing somehow seems to symbolize the end of the musical revolution and exhilarating cultural phenomenon which he and his bandmates inadvertently helped to generate over twenty-five years ago. Perhaps the coming demise of the scene is long overdue (as Vic Bondi has been arguing), since if truth be told it's been on life-support for some time now, but to me it's a source of ongoing frustration and sadness that punk, which began with such an enormous bang, looks to be gradually fading out with a whimper.

The true extent of the malaise struck me full force last weekend. ANTISEEN, one of the few punk bands left that still carries the mighty "fuck you" banner high, goes out of its way to break cultural taboos, and puts on a truly abrasive and aggressive live show, played three gigs in the Bay Area. At each one of those gigs, less than 100 people showed up. Part of the difficulty was that the person organizing their tour foolishly booked them into S.F. on a Sunday rather than a Friday or Saturday night, but that's really not the fundamental source of the problem. After all, within the past two months I've witnessed a spectacular gig by British punk pioneer NIKKI SUDDEN, a decent one by the great REAL KIDS, and a pretty darn rip-roaring one by the SKULLS (the snotty late 70's L.A. punk band), at all of which less than 50 people actually showed up. In other words, it seems evident that there is increasingly an inverse correlation between quality and attendance at so-called punk shows. One has only to consider last Friday night. At the very moment when ANTISEEN was wowing a relatively small audience of old-school punks, crusties, faux "redneck" punks, and skins in Richmond (a rundown town that's only a hop, skip, and a jump north of Berkeley) — and when Mike Stax's band the LOONS was cranking out some blistering 60's punk and beat tunes at the Café du Nord before a crowd of around 100 (many of whom appeared to be inspired more by the hip fashions in "Austin Powers" films than the music itself) — 900 youthful idiots wearing (metaphorical) smile buttons showed up at The House That Tim Yohannan Built (i.e., Gilman Street) to see NO MOTIV and the ALKALINE TRIO, two utterly generic pop-punk bands of the BLINK 182 stripe. I think it's safe to say that Tim Yo would have gone ballistic if two lame, wholly commercial bands of this type, both of whom arrived in their big tour buses and are representative of major label pap (not to mention fodder) in the worst sense of the term, were welcomed with open arms at Gilman. In other words, instead of being treated to an amazing spectacle of dripping blood, barbed wire, burning washboards, and busted tables, not to mention great songs like the classic "Two-Headed Dog" and the brand new "Ten Pounds of Shit in a Five-Pound Bag" (undoubtedly the punkest song title of the year), legions of clueless wannabe "punks" apparently preferred to be lulled to sleep by two groups that are completely antithetical to the true spirit of punk.

Beyond the current omnipresence of horrendous taste and the widespread lack of any real understanding of what punk was and is all about, the sad truth is that a broad-based punk scene that virtually every punk identified with to some degree hasn't existed since the early 1980s. I don't mean to suggest here that there weren't always deep ideological, cultural, and musical divisions within the punk scene, simply that once upon a time

almost everyone who considered themselves a punk felt like they were part and parcel of one big, albeit diverse, scene. That feeling of togetherness, however fanciful or tenuous, which once united all punks against (real or imagined) outsiders no longer exists. Nowadays the small, generally lifeless remnants of the punk scene are themselves internally subdivided into a host of even tinier musical (and perhaps also cultural/political) subgroups — 1) old-school ('77-style) punk, 2) glam punk, 3) garage punk, 4) 60's-type punk, 5) Mohican "drunk punk", 6) Oi, 7) "Southern-fried" punk, 8) noise- and art-punk, 9) pop-punk 10) emo, 11) riot grrrl, 12) NYHC, 13) straightedge hardcore, 14) Christian punk, 15) ultra-fast crustcore, 16) metal-punk, 17) big guitar Euro p-rawk, 18) punk'n'roll, 19) bland Professional Punk, 20) stoner rock, and the list could probably be extended ad nauseum — most of which increasingly have little or no contact with each other. There is of course a considerable amount of overlap between certain of these mini-scenes, e.g., between 1 and 2, between 3 and 4, between 1 and 5, between 5 and 6, between 7 and 20, between 9 and 19, between 9 and 10, between 10 and 11, between 12 and 13 and 15 and 16, between 18 and 1, between 2 and 17 and 16, etc., but in many instances the twains never meet. (For example, over 95% of the gigs I nowadays attend fall into categories 1-6 and 17-18, and I never, ever go to hardcore or emo shows.) Which may actually be as it should be, considering the radical diversity of musical tastes, cultural values, and political views that currently exists in the underground.

In other words, what we are confronted with today is a host of separate mini-scenes that have only the most tenuous links with one another. Hence it makes no sense at all to expect that every so-called "punk" will end up liking a given "punk" band or zine, since these generally appeal to quite different tastes. If one uses prominent punkzines as an illustration, one can say that *Hit List* caters primarily to rock'n'roll-oriented, anti-dogmatic punks, whereas *Ugly Things* caters to knowledgeable old (and new) 60's punks, *Gearhead* to fast car and big guitar p-rawk enthusiasts, *The Big Takeover* to thoughtful indie rock aficionados, *Punk Planet* to liberal/left emo fans, and *HeartAttack* to far left hardcore fans. Probably the only reason that the twain sometimes meets between these diverse zines and their audiences is that there still remain some overlapping areas of coverage, and many of the editors and writers know each other personally and have been fixtures on the scene for some time.

These ever-growing internal divisions within the overall punk scene help to explain its current lack of focus, not to mention its petty but vicious internal bickering and increasing cultural marginalization. There's no going back, of course, but the days when we all felt part of a single cultural movement taking on the rest of the damned world are long since gone. Punk culture is therefore inevitably destined to atrophy over time, much like hippie culture, whereas punk rock music, like rock'n'roll itself, is probably doomed to become a specialized, semi-nostalgic art form without much broader cultural and political resonance, much like jazz already is. It remains possible, as some have suggested, that the regressive, selfish policies of the odious Bush Administration will catalyze a whole new round of youth rebellion and help to forge a renewed sense of punk unity. But I sincerely doubt it, since the fissures within the punk scene itself have become too large and divisive to paper over. This appears to be a fairly typical process or dynamic in the historical evolution of oppositional social and cultural movements, including those with a musical orientation, so nothing can probably be done

about it. Nor, perhaps, should we even try to do anything about it. But at least we have the satisfaction of having gotten the last laugh at the expense of all those fools, including innumerable ex-hippies and so-called radicals, who once made fun of us and claimed that "punk rock" was nothing more than a trivial, short-lived musical and fashion trend. Why? Because even if it were all to collapse tomorrow, the punk underground has already managed to last over three times as long as the 60's countercultural underground. So, in the immortal words of ANTISEEN, "fuck all y'all." For this unparalleled excitement and unexpected longevity, and for all the lives which were transformed for the better by punk rock music, we owe Joey Ramone a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid.

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO PUNK OUT, I SALUTE YOU

One of the most annoying byproducts of Joey's tragic death has been the rash of self-aggrandizing eulogies penned by know-nothing "rock critics" who are desperately seeking to acquire some degree of hipster credibility by belatedly lauding the RAMONES. It goes without saying that most of these toadies never really liked punk rock, and very few indeed could have liked it back when it really counted, in the mid-70s. As I've been saying for years, if everyone who nowadays claimed to have loved punk rock in the 1977-era really loved punk rock back then, punk would have been a smashing commercial success rather than a very persistent, often marginalized, and at times surprisingly influential musical and countercultural phenomenon. Be that as it may, it would take far too much effort to ridicule every one of the dishonest, dull-witted journalists who are now trying to hoodwink gullible readers who are even dumber and more ignorant than they are, so I'll restrict myself to criticizing one representative example of corporate rock crit know-nothingism: the Top 50 list of punk records recently published by *Spin* magazine in honor of punk's 25th anniversary. Appearing on the first half of this list are several mediocre semi-punk bands (such as the RAINCOATS, the SLITS, and the horrible SLEATER-KINNEY, one of the worst groups I've ever had the misfortune of seeing and hearing), a number of arty "post-punk" bands (such as GANG OF FOUR, JOY DIVISION, P.I.L., PERE UBU, etc.), a couple of excellent non-punk bands (such as NIRVANA), and a few top-notch punk outfits (such as the PISTOLS, the CLASH, WIRE, and the BUZZCOCKS). But the second half of the list is a total joke, filled as it is with numerous bands that have nothing whatsoever to do with punk, musically or otherwise. (Perhaps the worst selection of all was black nationalist rap group PUBLIC ENEMY. Even if one wished to argue that anti-establishment rap serves the same function for pissed-off black youths as punk serves for pissed-off white youths, an argument I'm prepared to accept in a limited way, it's every bit as absurd to list PUBLIC ENEMY in a Top 50 list of punk bands as it would be to list the SEX PISTOLS among the Top 50 rap groups. Clearly, punk and rap have nothing in common from a strictly musical point of view, other than belligerence and raw aggression.) Rarely, then, has so much gross ignorance been passed off as expertise in a single article, which is saying quite a lot given the embarrassingly debased level of rock criticism that has long been characteristic of mainstream music publications.

To offset this sort of rubbish, I've decided to offer up my own Top 25 list of punk albums. I have no doubt that every other obsessive, knowledgeable fan of punk music will disagree vociferously with some of my choices (or, at the very least, rank them in a different

order), which is only to be expected given individual passions and differences in taste, but I don't believe that anyone will be able to accuse me of including records that are manifestly not punk on my list, as *Spin* foolishly did. Three additional caveats should be noted. First, in some cases I cheated a little by listing a retrospective compilation album instead of one of the band's actual albums, e.g., in cases where a particular group's best songs did not appear on LPs. These are marked with an asterisk. Second, I only put my favorite top 10 punk records in a ranked order of preference; the others are instead listed alphabetically. This is because I found it virtually impossible to definitively rank the remaining fifteen, since all my attempts to do so proved to be too dependent on my specific mood at that particular moment. Third, in some cases where I couldn't actually decide which of a particular band's LPs I preferred, I listed more than one as a tie (t/w). Keeping those qualifications in mind, let's begin with the Top 10 in ranked order:

- 1) SEX PISTOLS — "Never Mind the Bollocks" LP [UK]
- 2) CLASH — first LP [UK]
- 3) RAMONES — "Road to Ruin" t/w "Leave Home" LPs [US]
- 4) DEAD BOYS — "Young, Loud and Snotty" LP [US]
- 5) PAGANS — "Everybody Hates Me"* CD [US]
- 6) UNDERTONES — first LP [UK]
- 7) ANGRY SAMOANS — "The Unboxed Set"* CD [US]
- 8) SAINTS — "I'm Stranded" LP [Australia]
- 9) RADIO BIRDMAN — "Radios Appear" CD [Australia] (remastered version)
- 10) BLACK FLAG — "The First Four Years"* CD [US]

And now, the remaining 15 in alphabetical order:

- G.G. ALLIN — "Always Is, Always Was, and Always Shall Be" LP [US]
 AVENGERS — original LP [US]
 BOYS — first LP [UK]
 COCK SPARRER — "England Belongs to Me"* CD [UK] (tin)
 FORGOTTEN REBELS — "In Love With The System" LP [Canada]
 GENERATION X — first LP [UK]
 HUMBERS — "Positively Sick on 4th Street" LP [US]
 JOLT — LP [UK] (punky neo-Mod)
 KIDS — first LP [Belgium]
 LOLI & THE CHONES — "P.S., We Hate You" LP [US]
 PACK — LP [Germany]
 SKREWDRIVER — "All Skewed Up" LP [UK] (pre-Nazi)
 SNAIR — "Stay Home" LP [US]
 STIFF LITTLE FINGERS — "Inflammable Material" LP [UK]
 VIBRATORS — "Pure Mania" t/w "V2" LPs [UK]

Believe me, no one feels worse than I do about having to leave tons of other classic punk records off this list, including albums by the DAMNED GERMS, the BUZZCOCKS, the QUEERS ("Grow Up"), the DICKIES, D.O.A., the SUBHUMANS, the CIRCLE JERKS, MINOR THREAT (the complete discography CD), TEENAGE HEAD, WIRE ("Pink Flag"), the MISFITS, the ADVERTS, SHAM 69, the COCKNEY REJECTS, X-RAY SPEX, the D.K.'s, MENACE, and a host of others, but when push came to shove I was forced to select only those punk records that I actually listen to the most. In any case, I'm proud to have made my own small contribution to offsetting the influence of all the know-nothings writing for the corporate music press, who can and should — not to put too fine a point on it — fuck off and die. ☎

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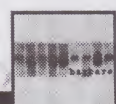
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First things first. HOT WATER MUSIC has a new full length out, and it's on Epitaph. It's currently Brett Gurewitz's favorite record, and packs plenty of punch, yet it might seem quite different to a lot of you. How different? Jeff Bale, who has never been able to stand the band walked in and asked what I was listening to the other day because it was so rockin'. It was the first track of their new full length, *A Flight And A Crash*. The record is way more rock, and more straight-forward than their previous releases. A lot of the tones are different, most noticeably the cleaner guitars and a different bass tone. A lot of the screamy vocals have been replaced by a rough version of melodic singing. I will be the first to admit that I was completely thrown for a loop when I heard the new record, but after a few spins, and some self-manipulation, I was all about it. I recently caught up with our friends at the Bottom Of The Hill, a local club where they were playing with SMALL BROWN BIKE (side note, and one that may make your life a hell of a lot better. If you dig HWM, or even kind of liked them but thought that their songs were a little too abstract or hooky, go buy the new SMALL BROWN BIKE. It's called *Dead Reckoning*, and will blow your mind. You can also expect to see an interview with them, probably in the next issue. They are amazing guys, and they rock like you wouldn't believe). I talked to HOT WATER MUSIC about their new record, and what they had been doing since we last interviewed them (Vol. 2, No. 2), and here's what they had to say...



HEY, ISN'T THAT THE GUY FROM THE SHERYL CRO(W)-MAGS? Yep. Chris Wollard, in the flesh.

The time we chatted, you were just about to go on Warped Tour. How was that, and what's happened since then?

George: I got Frankie pregnant, and then he broke his nose. (referring to LEATHERFACE's lead singer Frankie Stubbs, now assuming the fetal position in the corner wrapped around a bottle of cheap wine).

Chuck: The Warped Tour was great, but it was a lot of work. I'm glad we did it, but it made for long days.

And you guys played to an audience that wouldn't normally be at your shows?

Chuck: Yeah, it was cool. We made a lot of new fans, and a lot of new friends.

On the Warped Tour you were introduced to Epitaph, and they flew out and met with you a couple of times. You now have a new full length coming out on Epitaph. How was that experience, and how is Epitaph to deal with?

Chris: They're fucking awesome!

Chuck: Yeah, it's fantastic. It's just like a total family vibe, and they're all hard working and down to earth; it's just really everything you could ask for in a label.

You went in with a different producer this time, Brian



McTernan. How was that experience?

Chris: That was a very exhausting session, but it turned out cool.

Chuck: He really knows his shit, and he pushed us really hard.

Did you find new limits and boundaries within the band through this experience?

Chris: Oh yeah.

Chuck: We lived in the studio, and we didn't have a car. It was in the middle of nowhere. There was this one Chinese



place that you could walk down and get coffee at, and one liquor store, but that's about it.

What, no roadside smoked mullet vendor? (reference to one of Chuck's favorite eateries)

Chuck: The mullet man (laughs all around). No, there was definitely no mullet man around.

So, let's talk about the new record for a minute. It's quite different. Did you guys go in with these different ideas, or was this something that emerged in the studio?

Chris: We did a lot of demoing for the record, so we had the general sense of where we were going. We did write a little bit in the studio though.

George: We did the same thing that we did with every other record. We started writing songs, and then those all turn into other songs, and we keep improving on them and changing them until they are songs that we are happy with. I think that our songwriting has grown a lot since the last album, and this is what it took to make us happy with these songs.

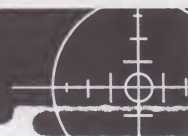
What would you say is the biggest difference in the new record?

Chris: The sound of it for sure. Everything just sounds better. The distortion on the guitars is rolled back so you can hear all the notes, you can hear all the bass and drum stuff perfectly, and it just sounds great.

George: The other records sounded good, but a lot of the stuff just got lost in the mix.

Chuck: It just always sounded somewhere between shit and OK. This time we just had more time. It's by far the best sounding record that we've done.

What would you attribute these changes to? It seems that your first recordings were so angry — with some serious-



LET ME SOFTLY CROON YOU A TUNE...while my bassist shreds like Jaco Pastorius on crack. Jason and Chuck.

ly negative overtones to the lyrics and the feel, and then there was the breakup that we discussed in the

Hit List interview, after which the lyrics and general feel became way more positive and upbeat, and now you're rolling back the distortion. Are you guys inching toward happiness, heaven forbid?

Chris: Our opinion of how we want these songs to sound has changed. I mean we're all growing up, well not just growing up, but changing. Everything changes. Life changes.

George: The way I look at my drum playing now as opposed to back then, I have a totally dif-

ferent attitude. The way Chris has his rig set up now is different then it was back then. I don't know if you get bored, or you just feel the need to change, but this is where we are, and the road that we came down is what got us here.

Chris: I don't think back then that I had a real opinion about anything that I was doing. I didn't know what the fuck I was doing. I'm not saying that I do now [laughs all around], but I have a better idea of what I like now. I also had shitty equipment back then, and we couldn't get these sounds even if we wanted to.

But I also couldn't imagine *Fuel For The Hate Game* with these sounds.

Chuck: But those were also different times. Not only was it different engineers and studios, but it was a different time in our lives, and different things that we were writing about. We were pissed off, and that's kind of how that record needed to sound.

Chris: We chose our sound for that based on what we had, what we could do, and what was the best for how we were feeling in

those songs. At some point you need to evolve though, you have to not get in a rut. We try to never have a rut.

With this evolution, are the beards gone forever? (reference to the lack of beard presence over the last few years).

Chuck: [laughs all around] They're always growing back.

Chris: Yeah, we stopped focusing on the beards, and started focusing on the music. [laughs] But really, we've never been an image-conscious band. We always just show up wearing whatever, looking however, and play our songs.

So back to the record. What was it that happened to your vocals during this recording?

Chuck: I lost my voice.

Was that from touring so much?

Chuck: Yeah, I just didn't know how to use it, and I was blowing it out all of the time. In the studio, I was completely gone after just singing a couple of songs. It sucked cuz I was totally amped to get in there and blast through it. I sang the first song, and it wasn't great, but we could go back and work with it, and the second song it just blew. Brian (producer) brought me in and said "you're doing long term damage to your vocal cords". He was really cool about it, he wasn't pushy at all, and he just wanted to throw his opinion

down. He said "I know it sounds extreme, but I know a guy in Boston who's an excellent vocal instructor...". I didn't want to hear that shit, you know, you're in the studio and you record. It's a project, and you're there from start to finish, and that's what it's about. Leaving — to me — I felt like I was completely just being cut off from everything, but I agreed just because I was so frustrated with what was happening, and I felt it was the best answer. Leaving was horrible, we had just gotten there, and we had put together the rest of the songs, and it was a crucial time to be leaving, but I was fed up with feeling like I couldn't do my part so I was like, "Yeah, I'll go see the guy in Boston." I ended up going there and staying with (longtime HWM cover artist) Scott Sinclair and some friends of ours. It was really lonely. I met the guy, and he taught me some really simple stuff, like warm ups and cool downs, and it made all of the difference in the world. I'm glad I went back there, because the record wouldn't have been the same. I was completely fucked, and I needed to figure out how to fix this.

We stopped focusing on the beards, and started focusing on the music.

-Chris Wollard

BRETT MATHEWS

Is this something that's helped in your live show as well?

Chuck: Yeah, definitely. I used to blow my voice out at every show by the second or third song, and now I can make it through.

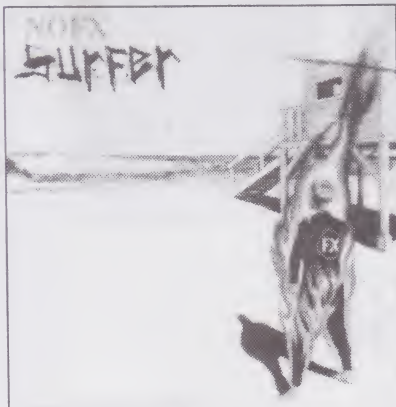
I've noticed, watching you guys play the songs off of the new record live, that you're going for it way more than you did on the record. Is that more how you wanted to sing the stuff live?

Chuck: Live is a different animal for us. The distortion is rolled back up, and the songs are way more aggressive live. It's how we've always been.

And that's an understatement. Live is *definitely* a different animal. Check out the new record. It comes out June 5th. The guys will be coming back around the country later this year on the Plea For Peace Tour with the ALKALINE TRIO. You can also see a couple of their songs on the new video release from No Idea!, entitled *Sight And Sound: The History Of The Future Volume 1*. It also has a video or two from DISCOUNT, LEATHERFACE, LOAD, MELT BANANA, SMALL BROWN BIKE, BURNMAN, and several other bands. It's not an MTV-style video — in fact it's mostly letterboxed black and white video footage from the back of a club during a band's performance, but it's still well worth checking out.

While we're on the subject of Epitaph, they have a new signing. Actually, it's an old Epitaph band, but they had a little hiatus from the label. That's right, BAD RELIGION will be returning to the home that they helped build. And on top of that, Mr. Brett has rejoined the ranks. He has already written a good portion of the record, and word from the Epitaph camp is that it's right in between *Against The Grain* and *Generator*, which aside from an out-of-the-blue fluke called *Stranger Than Fiction*, was the last great (and even worth mentioning) documentation of BR. So, funny situation: recently their drummer had to quit due to hearing problems, and former Minor Threat/Dag Nasty/Junkyard axe-slinger Brian Baker is still in the band. What does that add up to? Three guitarists, no drummer. I'm sure they'll figure it out. Recording starts in July, and the record is scheduled for an October release. Say what you want, but BAD RELIGION is still one of the greatest punk bands of all time. Even *The Gray Race* can't erase memories of *Suffer* and *No Control*!!

Speaking of *Suffer* (I love my oh-so-unsmooth segueways!), the cover art was recently parodied on a new 14 song NOFX 7" called *Surfer*. While I don't think it's quite as brilliant as the last NOFX songa-palooza 7", *Fuck The Kids*, it's still a must-have. Songs like "Fun Things To Fuck", and "Whoa On The Whoas", calling for an end to bands overusing "whoahs" in their songs (the singled out AFI and OFFSPRING). Anyhow, it's out and it's amazing. Recorded and mixed in two days — all



live. It doesn't have the huge production of a NOFX full-length; in fact a lot of the in-between song calculations for the next track are left in. Pick it up. If you don't have a record player, wait

Three guitarists, no drummer.



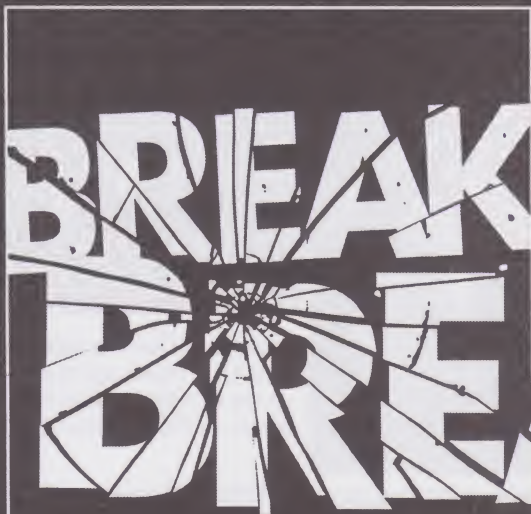
ANGER ABOVE, ANGER TO THE LEFT: American Nightmare and their brand spankin' new platter on EVR, respectively.

another year or so until they put both 7"ers and *another* 14-track 7" all on one CD.

On to the record of the year so far, and maybe the record of the genre. AMERICAN NIGHTMARE are the shit. If you dig old school hardcore a la NEGATIVE FX, search out everything this band has ever done, especially their new full-length, *Background Music*, which is being released June 12th by Equal Vision Records. 8 new songs, and a re-recording of three of their earlier classics. I think the band features ex-members of TEN YARD FIGHT and some other bands, but it doesn't even matter. Brutal hardcore punk that's in your face from note one to the final strum — which unfortunately comes way too soon. Look for an article on these guys in an upcoming issue of *Hit List*, and look for them on the road this summer with the current pride of the West Coast, the NERVE AGENTS.

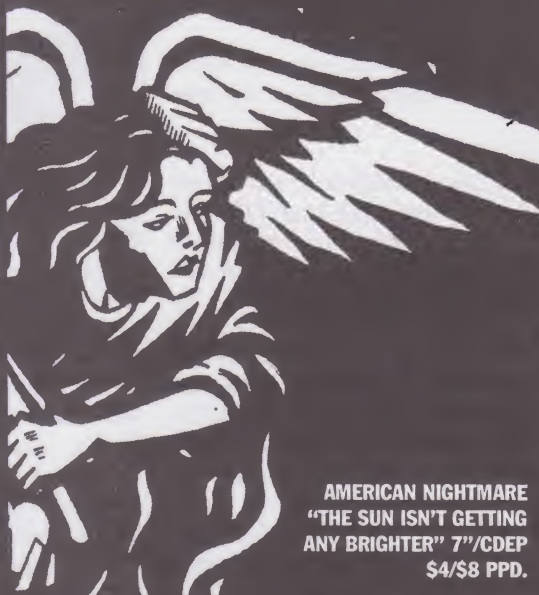
Well, that's about it for now. *Hit List* is in the middle of moving its world headquarters (read: I'm packing up my shit from my tiny-one bedroom place, and moving across town to a nicer one-bedroom place!!) As most of you can imagine, I hate reviewing records, but if something comes in that's so good that I have to keep it, then I'll grab it for review, just to make sure that I get a copy. These records are few and far between, but you can bet that if I keep it, it's probably amazing. In the midst of the move, I was unable to get to my review stack this month. Below is a list of the records that I had pulled out for review, yet didn't manage to get to. If it's a record that you were curious about, I'm telling you now that it's good. You can either go buy it now and enjoy it for an additional two months, or you can wait until next issue and get my full description and explanation of why you need to go buy it. Viva Martinez!

AMERICAN NIGHTMARE- *Background Music* CD
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ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES- *Blow In The Wind* CD
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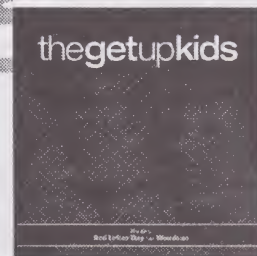
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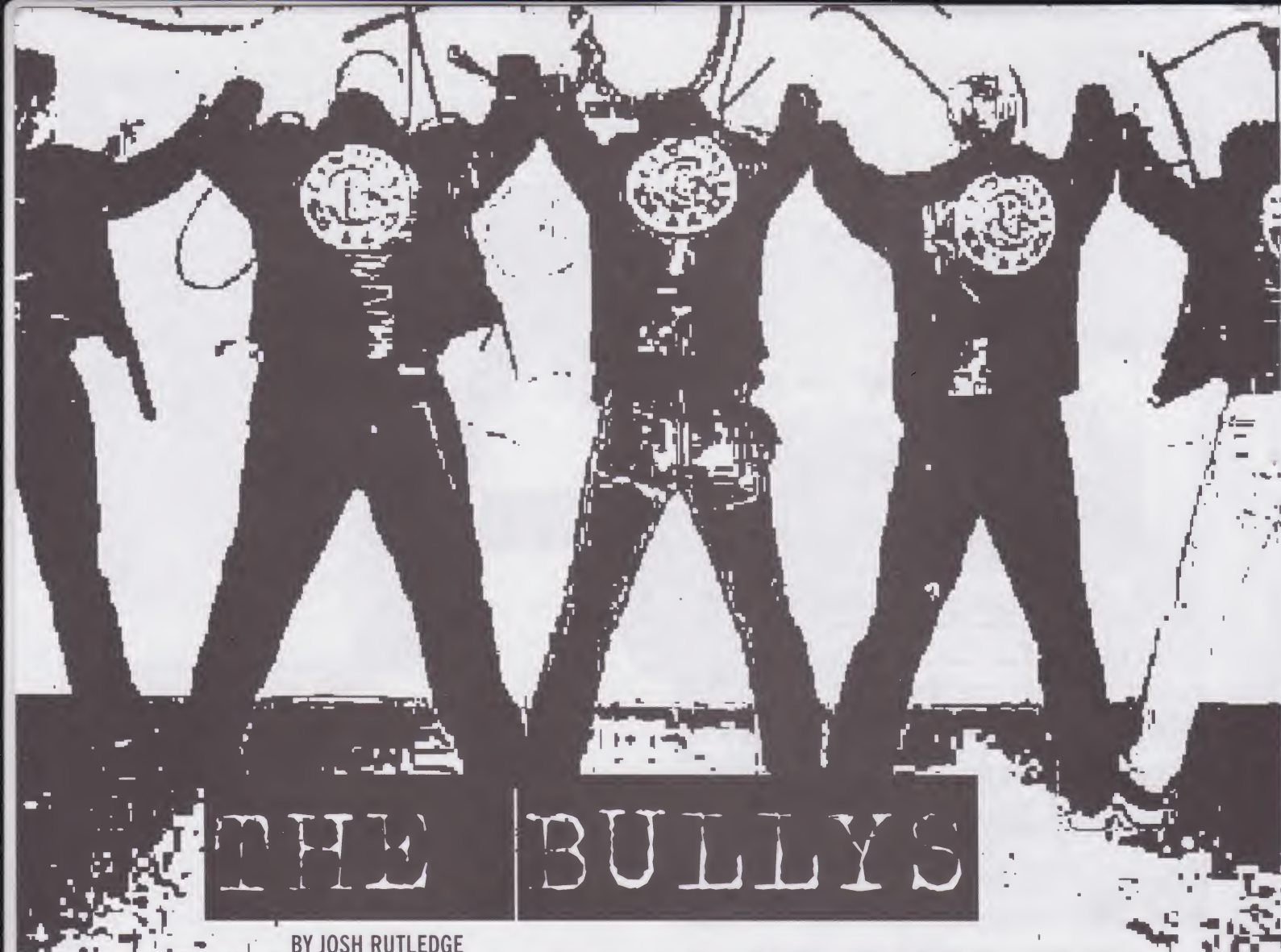
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BY JOSH RUTLEDGE



They rock hard and piss people off! They kick ass and make lots of noise! Their monstrous racket sends legions of pretentious, politically-correct hipsters running for cover! Who are these hooligans? They are The Bulllys, and they are New York City's finest punk rock band!

That's right: I said NEW YORK CITY! Fear not, my literate rock and roll comrades! The musical soul of NYC has not been completely devoured by tuneless political drivel and belligerently banal

THEY'RE BIG! THEY'RE BAD! THEY'RE MEAN! THEY'RE TOUGH! AND WHEN THESE FELLOWS STEP ON STAGE AND LET IT RIP, DELIGHTED ONLOOKERS KNOW THEY ARE WITNESSING A MOTHERFUCKING ROCK SHOW IN ALL ITS BAWDY GLORY!

macho man hardcore! Real PUNK ROCK still lives, and The Bulllys play it with swaggering ferocity!

Picking up where their sonic forebears (Dictators, Dead Boys, Ramones, KISS) left off, these five bad-asses from Queens deliver nothing short of an absolute rock and roll ASSAULT! Their raw, fast, hard brand of meat-and-potatoes punk rock slams straight ahead and knocks the living hell out of anything unfortunate enough to stand in the path of destruction!

Armed with a bad attitude and a set full of tuneful bashers like "Egomaniac" and "Sluts", The Bulllys have taken their act on the road in hopes of introducing a puritanical nation to a damn good time! Some will be offended. Many will be

frightened. But in the end, most will be thoroughly rocked!

Interview with the Bulllys' Johnny Heff and Joey Lanz by Josh Rutledge.

Josh Rutledge: Let's begin by talking a bit about what motivates and inspires this band. Why do The Bulllys exist? What do you hope to accomplish with this band?

Johnny Heff: After being in so many "rock" bands, me and Joey finally decided we wanted to start a band that we had control over. One in which we could do what we wanted to do. We don't wanna write for radio or perform to be P. C. like



“OUR STYLE WILL NOT CHANGE. LOUD, HARD HITTING, AND AGGRESSIVE IS ALL WE'LL EVER BE.”

so many bands do. We don't wanna wonder, "Can we do this"? We don't wanna follow the latest trend (Hey, that's a good name for a band). So ultimately, we exist to play punk rock 'n' roll the way we like it: fast, loud, and aggressive. And what we hope to accomplish is to have other people like it, too. And we have.

Rutledge: What are your general thoughts on the state of American punk rock at this point? How do The Bulllys fit in with everything else that's happening in the world of underground punk circa 2000?

Joey Lanz: Everybody and their mudder has a band dees days. Every fricking chick in NY that I try to hit on hands me a flyer for her band!

Johnny: I think your average American thinks of punk rock as an outcast (another good band name). When they think of punk, they think of sloppy timing, out-of-tune guitars, and singers who can't sing. And of course, poor production. And they use that "outcast" illusion as an excuse for their lack of talent. So they start a band. I think people hear the Ramones or Screeching Weasel and say, "I can do that". Yano what? They can't. Can't play the 8th notes right. They hear Green Day and say, "I can do that". But they can't. Can't sing that good. They hear Rancid and say, "I can do that". No way! Can't write great words. If I was on a deserted island, I would take "...And Out Come the Wolves." And I think "Life Won't Wait" is the 90's "London Calling".

Joey: If I was on a deserted island, I'd

take 90% a dees mopes and leave 'em dare.

Johnny: The Bulllys fit into the American underground scene cause we don't copy other styles. We never say, "I can do that." What we do say is, "I CAN DO THIS!" And we CAN do the 8th notes, sing, and write. But we do it our own way.

Rutledge: Are people put off by your tough-guy reputation? Your band seems to have a great sense of humor about it, but I just wonder how many people really "get it."

Johnny: At our shows, you'd have to be blind and deaf not to see the sense of humor in it. It's total "ANDREW DICE CLAY."

Joey: We've got some "liberal" types axing 'bout some tunes like "POP IS FOR FAGS" or "I'M A BOY." But believe it or not, most people do get it. Specially the chicks, yano? We do a song called "SLUTS", and most broads love it!

Johnny: Most people loosen up after the show when they see that we're approachable, and WE don't take the image so seriously.

Rutledge: You've been around for a while and put out a few recordings. Have you given any thought to how far you can take this band? Have you set any long-term goals?

Johnny: We did our first self-release, "STOMPOSITION" (produced by Marky Ramone), in the middle of 1998. We followed it up by self-releasing "Tonite, We

Fight Again!" in 1999. Then TSB in the U.K released a "best-of" those two discs in 2000. We also used some of those tracks for comps with Triple X, JUNK, R.A.F.R., Reptilian, Teepee Records, and AMP in Canada. So it seems like we've been around a bit. But since we recorded that material, we've replaced the bass player and drummer. So it feels like a brand new band. And our goal is to do recordings with this new lineup and get it done right. That's where a label like UNITY SQUAD will come in.

Rutledge: Your style is pretty direct: It's loud, hard-hitting, aggressive punk rock. Is that a style that you think you'll be sticking with over the long haul? Do you ever see the band radically changing its approach to music?

Johnny: Our style will NOT change. Loud, hard hitting, and aggressive is all we'll ever be.

Joey: "POP IS FOR FAGS." Just remember dat?" Did the RAMONES change? NO. AC/DC? NO. Anyways, can you imagine a band called the BULLYS playing anything else but hard-hittin', yano?

Rutledge: Talk a little about the new record that you'll be doing with Unity Squad Records. What kind of record is it going to be? Will it be similar to the ones that came before it?

Joey: Any record we do with anyone will be a solid rock 100%. The best shit we can do. No whad I mean? We done two self-releases before, and it'll be similar in terms

of keeping the best shit in dare and keeping da crap out. Know wad I mean, tough guy?

Johnny: It'll be guitar-driven. The vocals will be snotty. The words will be humorous, honest, and reflect our personal experience to some extent. And some of it will be totally tongue-in-cheek (one more name for a band). It'll be offensive to those easily offended. We certainly won't be thinking in terms of political correctness. Hopefully, we'll get someone just as qualified as MARKY to produce the one for USR.

Rutledge: How did you end up deciding to hook up with Unity Squad? Are you pretty excited about working with Chris?

Johnny: Yeah, we're looking forward to workin' with Chris and UNITY SQUAD. He's a hard worker and has good goals as far as the future of his label and the band. He understands what it takes to "sell" a band. Things like promo, distro, and radio.

Joey: We sent dis guy a tape, and he dug it. And he wants to do a record. We still got some tings we gotta work out, yano? Tings like: What songs we gonna do? How many tunes? We gonna re-record or re-master some a da shit we did before? No wad I mean? We do some Ramones, we do some CLASH, we do some DEAD BOYS, yano? Do we wanna record some a dis shit?

Johnny: Maybe we'll do a split with another USR band. Who knows? There's so much shit to consider when you do a record. We've got five opinions in the band, as do the people at USR. With all that in mind, we're hoping to have our USR release out by spring 2001.

Rutledge: Have you toured a lot? What are your thoughts about going on the road?

Joey: Being from NYC, we do a lotta East Coast shit. We done CANADA. We're gonna do LA and SAN FRAN. Tinkin' a doing EUROPE next year.

Johnny: We'd like to do the whole country cause there's so many places we wanna play.

Joey: But we ain't gonna lose our shirt playing in front a five people in bum fuck, Idaho. Yano wad I mean? Hey, Idaho? Now dat's a good name for a chick band! I-da-HO! Know wad I'm saying?

Johnny: We're looking to go out with a bigger band and play worthwhile shows. We have the image that appeals to suburban kids, the heavy hitters in the stix,

and the urban scenesters. So we're confident we'll do good across the country.

Rutledge: Give me a good idea of what the Bullys' live experience is like. Most bands will say that they are at their best on stage. Is that the case with The Bullys?

Johnny: The best way to experience us IS live cause you gotta check out the stage presence of this band. As we said we before, seeing us live helps you to understand the whole concept of the band.

Joey: Yano, da humor and shit. If you like fast, tight, funny, catchy, short and straight to the point punk rock-n-roll, you'll dig us. If your lookin' fa pyro and lipstick and shit, you ain't gonna get it wit us. You get five dudes in MC's lookin' like we're gonna kick your ass. And we dö! Wit da music. Yano? We're a buncha sweaty, beer-drinkin', girl-friend stealing, fight-startin', dirt-talkin', raw, offensive PUNKS!

Rutledge: So what's happening with punk rock in New York City at this point? I hate to ask such a generic interview question, but I'd love to hear about the NYC "scene." Do you play out a lot? Are there any really great bands that you play with often?

Johnny: NYC is NOT the punk capital of the world. But there's some cool shit going on here.

Joey: Yeah, CBGB's has some punk shows, and we play dare a lot. St. Marks Place has a punk vibe to it. We're playing da CMJ fest wit da CANDYSNATCHERS and ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN at da CONTINENTAL.

Johnny: There's a lotta cool "parties" at Don Hills, and Handsome Dick Manitoba

from the DICTATORS has a cool place to hang out. Anything the drag queens put on is usually based on a punk rock-n-roll theme and is pretty cool.

Rutledge: What drives you all as musicians at this point in your lives? Is there still a burning desire to play music? If you weren't playing in a band, what would you be doing with yourselves?

Johnny: On the business end, we never know what the future holds. Are we gonna make some money? I don't know. Are we gonna get on commercial radio? Who knows? Famous? Probably not. The desire to play is the only thing that keep us doing this. In this business, there's disappointment and discouragement every day. But the sound of Stack's electric guitar and Joey's voice on top of the BULLYS' rhythm section is like a fix. Just gotta have it. It's total satisfaction. It doesn't even matter if there's a mosh pit going on or there's a room full of people with their hands folded (although the pit is much better). I love the sound of this band, and it fills that desire. If I wasn't in a band, I'd be a recording engineer or a roadie or something in the scene. I love to be around music.

Joey: If I wasn't in a band, I'd be putting up sheetrock and doing construction like I'm doing now. Yano wad I'm saying?

Rutledge: Any final thoughts?

Johnny: Yeah, Check out our website at www.thebullys.com +



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
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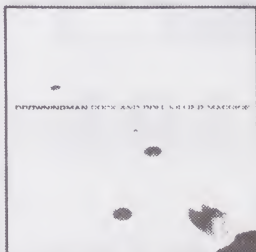


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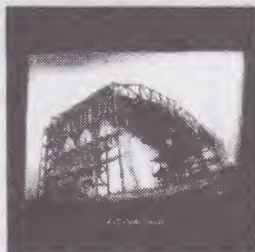
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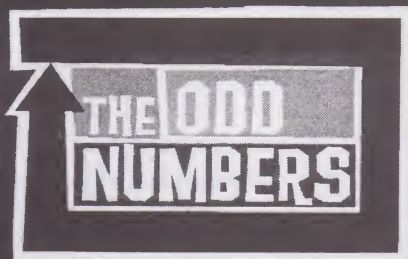
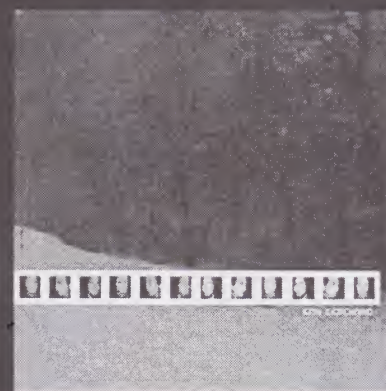
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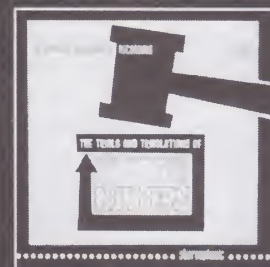
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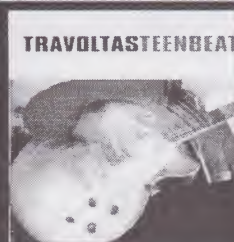
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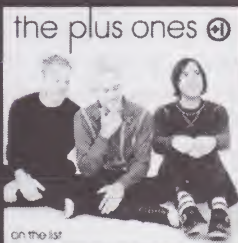
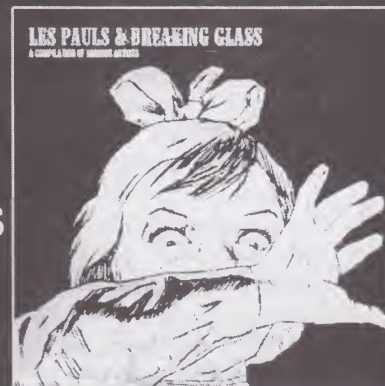


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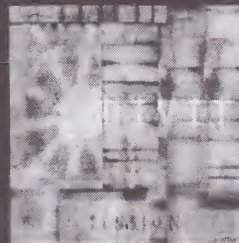
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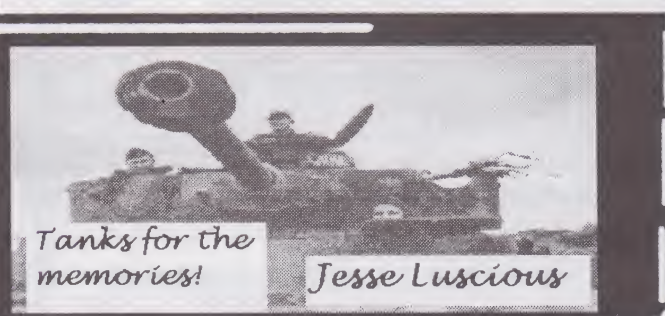
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WHY THE KIDS © SUCK! (A.K.A. "WHERE'S MY GERITOL!")

T rue story:
A 22 year old punk rocker, covered with patches from his favorite political bands, is watching TV news during the U.S. Spy Plane vs. China debacle a couple of months back. He's surprised that the Chinese fighter plane had hit the U.S. spy plane. This was about 10 days into the crisis, right before China released the 24 U.S. soldiers Easter weekend.

So what, you may say, lots of Americans are uninformed.



But this kid has all of those political bands' records and always goes to shows and always dresses the part. There's no reason for this kid not to know a basic part of something that's been splattered all over the news, saturation-style, for weeks. His ignorance is made worse by his ability to read and his instant access via records, zines, and the internet to all kinds of alternative viewpoints as well as the aboveground sources we all know and love/hate.

The *Atlantic Monthly* (jeez, does my column get dropped immediately upon mentioning that rag?) has a pessimistic rant — er, article — about how "the kids" in general (age 20 and below) are turning more and more to authority and conformity and away from questioning government and societal rules. Among the gross generalizations which litter any piece about an entire generation, a few things rang true. Take the following point:

Most Americans born after 1980 came of age in times of ever-increasing prosperity, and were 12 or younger when the dark ages of the Reagan/Bush years were cut short by that Arkansas asshole (who, after starting out good, steered the Democratic ship of state even further to the right). The Cold War was "over" (although we're still picking up the pieces) and the mindset we thirty-plus-somethings had living under the threat of nuclear annihilation is something to be studied in sociology classes. Watergate and the Iran-Contra scandals, which were true violations of domestic and international laws as well as ethically wrong, were succeeded by blowjobs in the Oval Office and shady land deals in Arkansas.

Taking this point into *Hit List's* area of coverage, punk rock broke through into the mainstream pop world on the heels of grunge. While there are still tons of jackass jocks and cops who harass "The Punks," punk's not anywhere near as dangerous or threatening as it once was to The Man. All of these factors mean that The Kids © have a clearer path to achieving whatever it is they want to with Punk.

That's exactly why lummoxes like the 22-year old above piss me off so much — they have breathing room to take the underground to its next evolution musically, culturally, and politically. The hip-hop underground has joined with some of the punk as well as the "electronica" (gag me) subcultures to develop more and more groundbreaking music and scenes, but where's the great smelly mass of The Punks? Where are the kids who subsist on a diet of the Dropkick Murphys and "Jackass"?

WHY WEB COMMERCE IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO FAIL, AND WHY THE LOWER CLASSES WILL BENEFIT

Two words: Credit cards. It's true, if you're on-line you know that credit card ordering is synonymous with web commerce. Also, many services require a credit card number for registration/access even if that card is not going to be used to buy something on that site: eBay comes to mind instantly as one such site. Before the on-line blitzkrieg of the late 90's, I was always frustrated by car rental agencies who would refuse to rent a car to non-credit card holders (me being one of them), no matter what. I couldn't even be a driver without a credit card if someone else with a credit card paid for the darn thing. It's the exact same thing with the internet. If you don't have credit or you have bad credit, you're fucked.

If you're a young person without a college education (and hence no access to the "free credit card" offers that inundate college campuses every Fall), then where are you going to get credit? [In my case, a close friend co-sponsored my first credit card, and after years of faxes and being on hold, I finally was able to extricate my buddy and have my own line of credit. This method was time-consuming and depended on a kind and trusting friend with credit, two factors which aren't available to everyone.] If you're a poor person with bad credit, which in this increasingly expensive country is quite possible, buying things on the web is impossible. Add to this the recent gift of draconian anti-bankruptcy laws from Dubya to the credit card companies, and you have the seeds of the real long-term failure of the internet. Forget the dot-com collapse, long-term exclusion of a huge segment of society is an easy way to make sure a product delivery method fails.

In terms of the web regaining some of its original non-consumer character, this is a great thing. The continued proliferation of cheaper computers, copy shop computers, public library computers, and elementary/high school computers means that there that many more ways for the poor to access the ideas and freedom that the net can provide, once the sometimes all-encompassing specter of consume! consume! consume! is removed. Sure, brand new computers are generally priced out of the reach of most non-credit having folks, but there are tons of decent used computers out there whose owners upgraded to the latest, fastest model available.

WHY VERBING NOUNS SUCKS

Or, "Why randomly changing nouns into verbs because you're a sorry-limited-vocabulary-having-sack-of-shit sucks." Some would call

me a grammar fascist, but I prefer being called someone who can communicate using the English language. I'm nowhere near perfect, what with my preference for run-on sentences, but my family are English teachers, writers, and librarians, so I come from lingo-lovin' stock. You could say I was born with a paperback in my hand instead of a silver spoon in my mouth.

That said, English, like any living language, is constantly being changed by its users, which is as it should be: Without change, we'd be trying to describe cars and electricity with the vocabulary of the Anglo-Saxons of the 10th Century. Also, I dig slang, since it allows all of us to own a little piece of our language and it also happens to be pretty revealing culturally, as any linguist will be happy to explain. But, some things simply should not be, and turning nouns into verbs because one is too lazy to think of the right sentence structure is one of those things.

During the recent (burst) bubble of local web mania, the language you're reading right now took a beating from the newly-moneyed high school graduates who were too busy spending Venture Capitalist money to take the time to speak recognizable English. Things "trended" towards sluggish psyches "transitioning" the lingo to a 1st grade level. When I ran a local disabled services non-profit, my program manager, an otherwise intelligent accountant by trade, loved to mangle the language this way. I always called her on it lightheartedly, but she maintained that since the language is alive, such changes are acceptable linguistically. I call that bullshit.

Don't fall into the trap of easy verbs — as with easy money, there are always strings attached. In this case, you end up sounding like a know-nothing yuppie. And if you want to get on my bad side instantly, "verb your nouns" when you meet me. It bugs the shit out of me and will ensure that I think you suck.

IT'S ABOUT A CLASS WAR, CREEP! (A.K.A. AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DOESN'T SUCK, BUT "REVERSE DISCRIMINATION" DOES)

Hey folks, it's time to wake up — the current racial balkanization of the U.S. is just what The Man wants: po' whites fighting po' blacks fighting po' Mexicans. It's not about race, it's about class. The rich, with a few honorable exceptions like George Soros, are sticking it to

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the rest of us with the help of the corporations they run and the government giveaways that their governmental peers hand them, like NAFTA. So next time you think to yourself "Racial Group X is ruining the country," stop and think about what bullshit you're spewing. Your own racial group's poor are just as screwed by The Man, although the exact methods of being screwed are probably different. That said, completely dismantling racially-based affirmative action is stupid and only serves to consolidate the power of the ruling class. People who cry "reverse discrimination" are willfully ignorant that affirmative action is a temporary measure to correct the long American tradition of keeping non-whites and women out of the competition for power and wealth. To say that affirmative action has

done its job is quite premature, judging from the continued degradation of education for the lower classes (not only for non-whites, but for all poor kids) as well as the continued difference in wages for women vs. men. When equality between poor whites and poor non-whites, and between women's wages and men's wages is achieved, I will be the first to insist on a change-over to class-based affirmative action, but while the field's still tilted against non-whites and women, we must keep the racial and gender-specific programs in place. End of sermon.

KICKIN' ASS...

Worthy releases this month include FEAR "American Beer," THUG MURDER "The 13th Round," MOMMIE'S FRIEND "Spilt Milk," LARS FREDRIKSEN AND THE BASTARDS, THE LIVING END "Roll On," and "The Sugar Hill Records Story" box set — it's 5 CDs and one 12" of great summer

music. I found my copy used for \$40, and it's completely worth it. One added bonus to all the great tunes is hearing early- to mid-80's rap artists curse and talk about "gangster rap" and "gangster lean" years before N.W.A. and DR.DRE "originated" gangster rap.

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

By the time this comes out our new band the FRISK will have its first release, "Rank Restraint", out on Adeline Records. "Rank Restraint" is an 8-song 12"/CD EP that we're extremely stoked on. Since we include members of A.F.I. and the NERVE AGENTS, we're a very part-time band and live shows are few and far between. My first solo attempt at a website should be up at www.thefrisk.com, so look it up and make fun of it. The CRIMINALS final record, "Extinct", is out on F.O.A.D. Records (www.foadrecords.com) as well — it's another 8-song release (10"/CD EP) that I fully back. No offense to Adam/Hairhurt or Todd/Recess who released our first two records, but this record is what I wish the CRIMINALS sounded like from day one.

Insert clichéd 'punk' sign-off here... ☺

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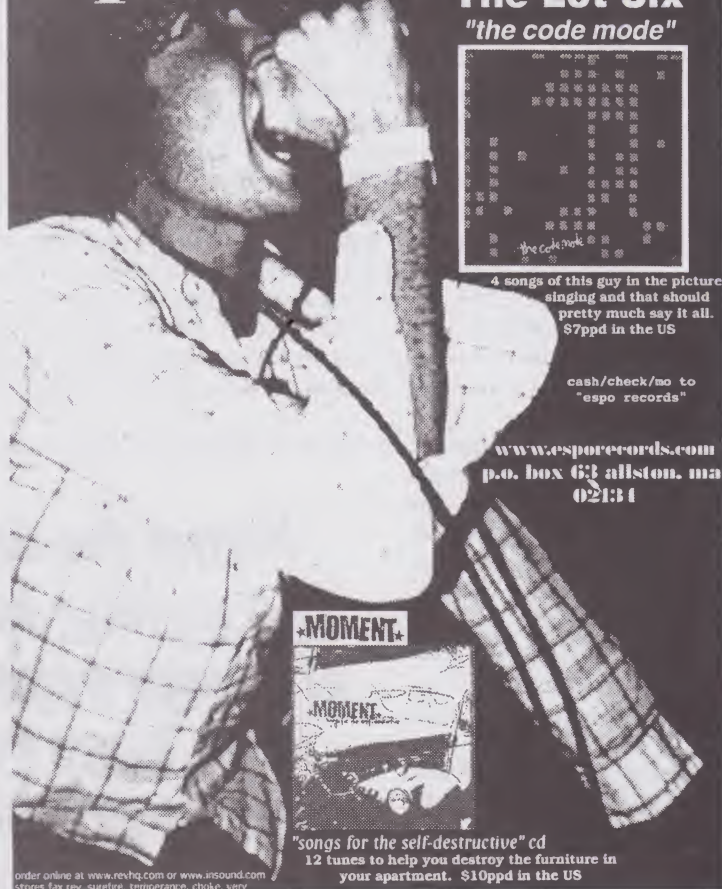


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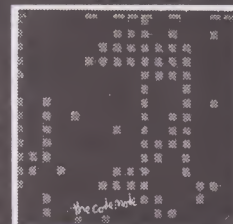
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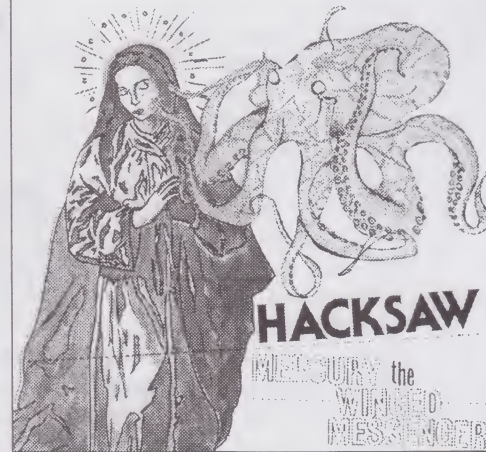
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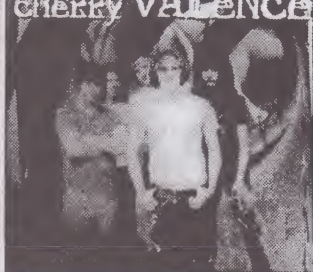


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THE EMBROOKS

BY BRYAN THOMAS (WITH ASSISTANCE FROM VENDETTA FANZINE'S BEN SZPORLUK)



"Liam Watson is God!" The declaration is drummer Lois Tozer's emphatic response when asked about the thundering, feedback-rich freakbeat sound the Embrooks have captured on "Our New Day", released last summer by the legendary Bomp! label's Voxx subsidiary. That freakbeat sound - a neologism which, depending on who you ask, was either contrived by Bam Caruso label czar Phil Smee or Richard Allen, who claims to have used it first for his 80's-era fanzine - is apparently a direct result of prodigiously-talented recording engineer Liam Watson,

the man responsible for twiddling the knobs of the gloriously all-analog 8-track recorders in London's Toe Rag Studios. "Our New Day", in fact, could be a long-lost artifact from the Swinging London heyday of the Creation, the Eyes, the Smoke, Les Fleur De Lys, the Birds, and a handful of others. However, there's also a scuzzier mid-Sixties "garage" rock vibe in there, too. Bassist/vocalist Mole Lambert agrees: "It's sort've a crude garage [sound] really, I suppose. We've constantly avoided the fuzz thing. We're going for a pre-fuzz, teen-blast." The band had previously recorded on four-track equipment, which

Mole thinks "is good for that poor quality US garage sound, but in terms of aiming for a UK Mod sound, Toe Rag's the real thing, and Liam Watson IS a genius." The band have nothing but high regards for Watson, who would get them to relax in the studio by joking with them, even calling guitarist/vocalist Alessandro Cozzi Lepri "Luigi" instead of Al, which he prefers. "He'd say 'Luigi, your vocals are not very convincing,'" says Al, laughing at the memory. "You sound like an Italian tourist stumbled into a beat session!!" or "Luigi, your guitar-solo should be as smooth as a trout spinning in the river. At

the moment it sounds like a bin-liner full of dog-shit being caught in the rocks!!" Lois recalls that the recording process "went well, with no real problems in the live takes, until we got to the last song, 'Eyes Of Love,' and I completely lost it..After trying and being 'For God's Sake'ed' countless times, Liam (The Genius) Watson came and called a halt to the shouting and we went down the pub, got bladdered and finished the bloody thing off at 11am the next day in one take!" After getting over that bump, Lois says "we all sat in the freezing little control room, listening to mixes and wincing at bumbles and praying they could be 'mixed out,' and in one case they were cut out, literally, with Liam's editing knife!! We won't go into which track got that treatment!!!"

The Embrooks' line-up has remained virtually unchanged since they formed at the end of 1996. Lois had been in a handful of bands, including the Dirty Burds, but only took up the drums to play with the Hellcats, whom she says were "a god awful combo of little talent." They released a single and an EP. Later, she and Hellcat guitarist "Merv" joined up with Mole (who had been drumming for the Mystreated and "a raucous three-piece called 'Stewed'" at the time). They formed the Lyds, named for a town in Kent and "meaning Lid with no purpose." Lois continues: "We did a fair few gigs, released a single on Dig The Fuzz, then Merv went down the temporary madness route, (undoubtedly driven there by my driving and drumming), and left the band after a gig in Nottingham!" Soon after, they spied Al guesting on guitar with

Head & the Hares during a Mod/Garage 2-dayer in Belgium ("a dirty weekend," Lois says), not far from Lois and Mole's hometown of Folkestone. Al came aboard only after Lois did a lot of "begging and pleading." "There was a small problem of him living seventy miles away in London," she says, "but willpower overcomes much." Mole says that for Lois and himself, being based in Folkestone has had its benefits and its detractors. "With me and Lois living so far outside of London, it's sometimes hard to keep track of what's going on, but Al's our main link to the heart of the Beast!!"

The Lyds quickly evolved into the Embrooks. The name, Lois says, from a bastardization of "Enbrook Valley, in the tradition of 'The Dovers,' 'The Enfields' and so on." At first, they were a rather "moody teen punk thing," as Mole puts it, but they discarded this approach in favor of a "full on freakbeat Mod explosion, with a nod to the Mod Psych of the era (Creation/Smoke etc)." This isn't another case of choosing Mod style over substance, in case you were wondering, despite the fact that the cover of "Our New Day" does have them sporting stylish fire-engine red Italian rounded-collar shirts with beige arm stripes the same color as their tight-fitting turn-up narrow trousers (the matching outfits were presents for the band, designed by ex-Mystreated guitarist Sean Thomas, but could have come straight off the racks of a Carnaby Street shop circa 1967). "Style is important to me and the others," says Mole, "which is good. If you only have one person in a band who gives a shit what they look like, it looks a little

weird!!!!!"

Though Al has stated previously that "London smells," he now really enjoys the city. "Lots of clubs, great music, lots of fun." Even though Mole has previously called the contemporary London scene "quite ropery," he now says "the majority of the people are more open-minded about what they listen to, and not so stuck up their own arses!!" "There are probably more people on the Mod Scene who are more into UK stuff, which is good for us!!" he says. "I don't think many of those lot would've dug the earlier stuff much, but that kind of sound is maybe geared more to listening than live energy." Despite the fact that they've recorded a wide spectrum of covers - examples include the Birds' "Say Those Magic Words," "You've Been Unfair" by the Clique ("60s not 90s!!" Mole asserts), various Dutch Beat songs (including Outsiders' mournful, folk/beat raveup "Sun's Going Down," "Seeing Her" by the James Mean, "(For) Another Man" by the Motions.), and assorted others by the Gestures, the Rascals and Glass Menagerie - Mole still thinks it's "a little tricky" to list their main influences. "The Who are obviously a very big influence," he admits, "in terms of the power we want to achieve, and their general flashiness and their concern with image. I guess the Creation would also apply for similar reasons, that whole Mod/Freakbeat thing of gorgeous looking bands creating an unholy racket with huge Marshall amps!!" Lois says she got into music heavily during late-Seventies Mod revival, when her "school discos were always playing the Who, Desmond Dekker, and soul." She

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bought a scooter at age sixteen, and listened to mostly UK-based Mod bands, Hammond organ-based R&B/acid jazz, and new wave ("the Stranglers, mainly") until someone loaned her a Beau Brummels tape in 1985. From that moment on, she says she was "sold on beat!" She's also a big fan of Dutch and Australian bands from the Sixties, and adores U.S. vocal harmony groups like the Great Society, as well as various UK pop and freakbeat. "If you can do the 'chicken on fire' dance to it," Lois nearly beams, "I'm there!" Meanwhile, over in Italy, Al was also listening to bands like Hüsker Du, That Petrol Emotion, and the Triffids until around 1989, when he became hooked on the Sixties sound and garage-band revivalists ("the Chesterfield Kings") after he bought the Tempos' LP (Crypt), a record, he says, that "changed my life!"

About a year ago, the Embrooks stopped playing all of their U.S. covers, and are sticking with the UK and Euro Beat sound of *Our New Day*. Lately, Al says, they've been doing covers "If You Stay Too Long" (Creation), "Think About it" (Yardbirds), and a couple of obscure songs by Barrier and Mike Stuart Span. "I only listen to British music nowadays," Mole continues, "however, I can't erase years I spent listening to USA garage." Asked for a few of his fave LPs including "the first three Who LPs, the Monks' 'Black Monk Time', 'Introduction To the Motions', Golden Earring's 'Just Earrings', the Elevators' 'Psychedelic Sounds' ('best U.S. LP ever, in my opinion'), and most of the Beatles LPs 'up till Pepper. After that, no

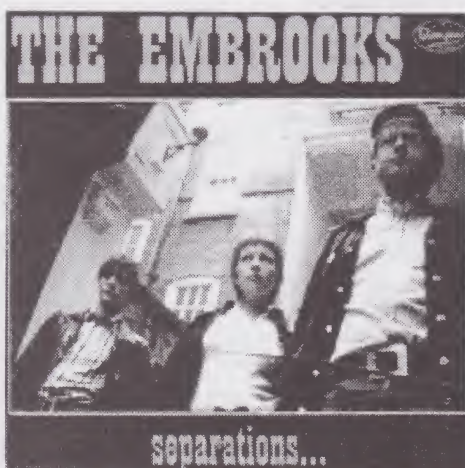
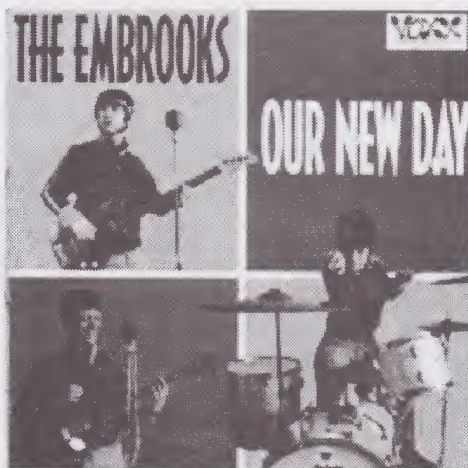
thanks!!"). Al pipes in with a few faves of his own: the Sevens LP, the Easybeats' "Volume 3", the Hollies' "Butterfly", Grapefruit's "Around Grapefruit", Octopus' "Restless Night", and Judas Jump's "Scorch". The Embrooks' own recorded output thus far consists of a handful of singles and two smashingly good albums. Their first single - 1998's "But I Didn't Know Him"/"Fight Fire" (Dig The Fuzz - DIG 030) - was a limited pressing; it's now out of print). Next up was the 4-song self-titled EP - "Don't Ask Me Anymore"/"Natasha"/"Where Were You?"/"Things Come Back To You" - recorded just one month after the band formed but released in '98 on Sympathy For The Record Industry (SFTRI 521). Another single, ("More Than Ever"/ "You Can Be My Baby") was issued in March '99 on the Spanish Guerssen label (GUESS SG 004). The band's first full-length album - "Separations" - was originally released, vinyl only, on Dig The Fuzz (DIG 037) in April '99. A newly re-mixed, re-programmed CD version of the band's debut was recently reissued on the L.A.-based Dionysus label (ID 123387). The 14-track CD drops one track from the LP, but now includes two songs from their Sympathy EP and adds the band's cover of "Fight Fire" (previously recorded by the Fantastic Dee Jays, who had, in turn, covered the obscure original by the Golliwogs, a pre-Creedence band fronted by the Fogerty's). Touring has taken the Embrooks all over Britain (including the New Untouchables Mod Rally on the Isle of Wight) and much of Europe: Germany, Belgium and France, and various short tours of Italy (where they played the legendary Festival Beat), and Spain (including the Purple Weekend International Mod Festival in '98). During

Halloween weekend of '99, they were one of the much-lauded opening acts at the first Las Vegas Grind, pelting the rowdy crowd with Silly String™ and tiny plastic spiders between songs. They finished off their subsequent mini-tour of the West Coast with heavily-attended shows in San Diego, L.A. and San Francisco.

"I would say that the American audience was the best so far," Al says, "partly because the USA tour was more efficiently organized." Earlier this year, the Embrooks returned to Italy in April for a twelve-day cross-country tour. "I like to play in Spain and Italy," Al continues, "especially for the weather and the food. The audience can be very up for it but there is no guarantee. The last Italian tour was kind of disappointing, revealing a scene of people with reduced enthusiasm, thinner hair and increased bellies!" Mole, Lois and Al returned to the U.S. again in November 2000 for East Coast shows including an appearance at the Cavestomp festival in New York (alongside Richard & the Young Lions, the Troggs, and the Blues Magoos, among others). That same month was also the likely due date for their next 3-track EP, released by the Swiss label Max Picou (MP 008), which was recorded at the same Toe Rag session as their Spanish single). The Embrooks have their sights on Japan for this spring, just in time to promote a track they've recorded for a projected Japanese EP (the Sorrows' "No, No, No" sung in Italian!!) which was released in September.

Future plans? "Some friends of ours in Glasgow are starting a label and asked for a track for a comp 10-inch, too," Lois reports, "and there's also been talk of a 45 on Misty Lane, which is still under negotiation. Dig The Fuzz have a track of ours ["I Despise You" by Dutch band Q65] ready for a comp LP they're doing next year, too." They'd also like to record another album for Vox: "To be asked to record for Bomp! again would be a pleasure. I have never met such an organised bunch of people in this area, not just people we deal with, but from what our friends have told us, we have really landed on our feet." No doubt they'll all be wearing vintage pointy-toed Cuban heels! ✚

Bryan Thomas does promotional work for the Del-Fi reissue label.



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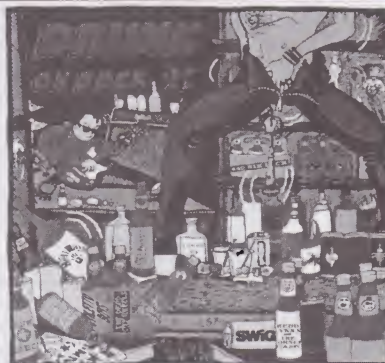


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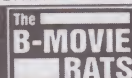
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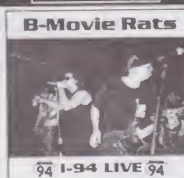
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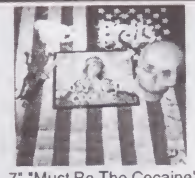
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- H. L. Mencken

"But I also made it clear to [Vladimir Putin] that it's important to think beyond the old days of when we had the concept that if we blew each other up, the world would be safe." Washington, D.C., May 1, 2001

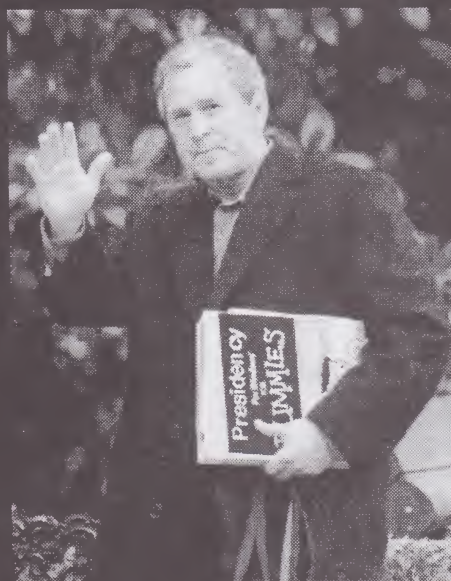
"Whatever it took to help Taiwan defend themselves." On how far we'd be willing to go to defend Taiwan, "Good Morning America", April 25, 2001

"First, we would not accept a treaty that would not have been ratified, nor a treaty that I thought made sense for the country." On the Kyoto accord in an interview with the *Washington Post*, April 24, 2001

"It's very important for folks to understand that when there's more trade, there's more commerce." Quebec City, Canada, April 21, 2001

"Neither in French nor in English nor in Mexican." Declining to answer reporters' questions at the Summit of the Americas, Quebec City, Canada, April 21, 2001

"We must have the attitude that every child in America, regardless of where they're raised or how they're born, can learn." New Britain, Conn., April 18, 2001



"Ann and I will carry out this equivocal message to the world: Markets must be open." Swearing-in ceremony for Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, Washington, D.C., March 2, 2001

"Of all states that understands local control of schools, Iowa is such a state." Council Bluffs, Iowa, Feb. 28, 2001

"Those of us who spent time in the agricultural sector and in the heartland, we understand how unfair the death penalty is." Omaha, Neb., Feb. 28, 2001

"My plan plays down an unprecedented amount of our national debt." Budget address to Congress, Feb. 27, 2001

"You teach a child to read, and he or her will be able to pass a literacy test." Townsend, Tenn., Feb. 21, 2001

"We're concerned about AIDS inside our White House, make no mistake about it." Washington, D.C., Feb. 7, 2001

"There's no such thing as legacies. At least, there is a legacy, but I'll never see it." To Catholic leaders at the White House, Jan. 31, 2001

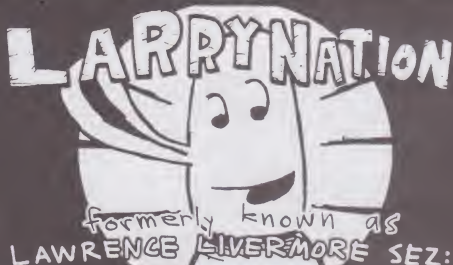
"I am mindful not only of preserving executive powers for myself, but for predecessors as well." Washington, D.C., Jan. 29, 2001

"My pro-life position is I believe there's life. It's not necessarily based in religion. I think there's a life there, therefore the notion of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness." Quoted in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jan. 23, 2001

"I'm hopeful. I know there is a lot of ambition in Washington, obviously. But I hope the ambitious realize that they are more likely to succeed with success as opposed to failure." Interview with the Associated Press, Jan. 18, 2001

THE INDISCREET CHARM OF BARBARISM

There are two very natural propensities which we may distinguish in the most virtuous and liberal dispositions, the love of pleasure and the love of action. If the former is refined by art and learning, improved by the charms of social intercourse, and corrected by a just regard to economy, to health, and to reputation, it is productive of the greatest part of the happiness of private life. The love of action is a principle of a much stronger and more doubtful nature. It often leads to anger, to ambition, and to revenge; but when it is guided by the sense of propriety and benevolence, it becomes the parent of every virtue; and if those virtues are accompanied with equal abilities, a family, a state, or an empire may



be indebted for their safety and prosperity to the undaunted courage of a single man.

— Edward Gibbon

Everyone prefers belief to the exercise of judgment.

— Seneca

Jose Palafox, that rootin'-tootin', pistol-packing revolutionary, has put out a call for "progressive white folks" to "school" me on the concept of "white privilege." Why he is unwilling or unable to "school" me himself remains a mystery. As a Ph.D. candidate, he has presumably dedicated himself to educating others as well as himself. I'd prefer not to think that his obsession with dividing everything and everybody along racial lines has led Palafox to believe that white people can only be educated by other white people and people of color only by other people of color. Apartheid, after all, has finally been abolished even in South Africa, let alone America.

So I'm left with inferring one of two explanations for Palafox's unwillingness to educate me himself. Perhaps he thinks that white brains are incapable of embracing the lofty concepts of his superior Hispanic mind — a neat standing on its head of the old, equally flawed belief that certain minorities were unsuited for the level of education offered to white children. More likely, he's a subscriber to one of the oldest forms of American yahooism: "I've already made up my mind; don't bother me with the facts."

I got a far more convincing argument from a Vietnamese-American student at UC-Berkeley, a young man who's still struggling with his English but is nonetheless excelling at one of the nation's toughest public universities. Although he got into

Berkeley on his own merits — Asians, like whites, are considered undeserving of help from affirmative action — he has faced odds at least as tough as those confronting black and Hispanic students. His parents lost everything in the Vietnam War, came to America as refugees, and have worked at minimum wage jobs, sustained only by the dream of securing a better life for their children.

Yet this young man, while acknowledging that many black and Hispanic students — and worse, their parents — just don't seem motivated to pursue higher education, still supports affirmative action because he believes in the importance of cultural diversity. I argued that while that was a noble aim, it would be better pursued by improving the quality of primary and secondary education, not by awarding university places to those not qualified for them. I was willing to listen to the arguments of my Vietnamese friend because he was motivated by nobler sentiments than those which Palafox espouses. He wants others to benefit from the same opportunities that have enabled him to transform his life in ways his parents could never have dreamed; Palafox has stated forthrightly that his aim is to destroy, by violence if necessary, the very system that has made those opportunities possible.

I've raised this question before, but it bears repeating: why, if Palafox feels the American social and political system is so rotten that it no longer has a right to exist, has he so wholeheartedly embraced the opportunity it has offered him? He begs others to educate me about "white privilege," but provided he can curtail his habit of getting arrested, he'll soon be in a position of very great privilege himself, that of a well-paid, upper middle class professional. Some might sense hypocrisy here. Palafox, though, would probably argue that his aim is not a cushy academic career, but to infiltrate the American system and destroy it from within. Many 60s radicals claimed the same thing, of course, and ended up with, well, cushy academic careers, but I don't doubt they were once sincere in their intentions, and I don't doubt that Palafox is similarly sincere.

A better question might be why the system Palafox is determined to destroy has welcomed him into its bosom. Perhaps it is attempting to neutralize or co-opt his revolutionary zeal, but I wouldn't give it credit for that much cleverness. Perhaps Palafox managed to slip through the cracks, perhaps no one at his university has noticed that his anger and vengefulness are hardly consistent with a dispassionate inquiry into the nature of truth.

Palafox is far from being the first university student determined to overthrow the government. There have been student radicals for as long as there have been universities, there have been rebellions and even full-fledged revolutions, and civilization has managed to muddle through mostly unscathed. But the racially and ethnically based tribalism that Palafox advocates is a threat of a different order than many past movements. Most of those movements sought, although sometimes in hamhanded or misguided fashion, to reshape civilization into something more fair and just. Palafox's ideas, if carried to their logical conclusion, are an attack on civilization itself. He is, in short, an ambassador for barbarism.

That may smack of overkill. The term "barbarism" itself seems quaint in this era of moral and cultural relativism. While historians and anthropologists once distinguished between civilization and barbarism, we are now encouraged to view other cultures not as "backward" or "less developed" but simply as "different."

The concepts of civilization and barbarism are relative — to a degree. The most advanced civilizations of the past engaged in behavior — slavery and human sacrifice, for example — that we would consider barbaric by today's standards. But barbarism and civilization are not simply two points along the same continuum, nor is barbarism just a crude and unpolished version of civilization, Civilization Lite, as it were. While civilization and barbarism have many characteristics — and many brutalities — in common, they differ in one fundamental way. Civilization is capable of sustaining itself. Barbarism is not.

It could be argued that civilization itself creates barbarians. It is certainly true that barbarians could not exist without a civilization to prey upon. Nomadic tribes roamed the world for tens of thousands of years, but they did not become barbarians until they began butting heads with the wealth and power of ancient empires like China and Rome.

Left to themselves, the tribes of Northern Europe and Mongolia might have gone on shepherding, hunting, gathering, and farming until they developed civilizations of their own. But the riches of the imperial powers were too tempting a target, and the old ways of life were replaced by an economy based largely on plunder. Anti-imperialists, then and now, could protest that empires like Rome were themselves based on plunder, and they would have a point. The Romans built their empire on resources and slaves looted from their far-flung provinces, but once that foundation had been laid, they also developed an agricultural and manufacturing economy that was capable of sustaining itself and of feeding and housing most of the known world.

The barbarians, by contrast, were not out to build empires or cities or to lay down traditions in art, science, and philosophy that would last through the ages. True, their descendants would eventually accomplish such things, but that wouldn't be for another thousand years. In the waning days of the Roman Empire, though, the barbarians didn't look far beyond one obvious truth: there were enormous riches just sitting there, ripe for the taking. Had they been a bit more sophisticated, a bit less short-sighted, they might have realized that in destroying the Roman Empire, they were also destroying the wealth that they had come to depend on. Once the cities had been sacked and the farms looted out of existence, times got very tough indeed. The following centuries were known as the Dark Ages, a period when human progress seemed not just to stand still, but to reverse itself.

A stroll through a museum of antiquities will illustrate what a drastic reversal this was. There are Roman housewares, jewelry, and furnishings of such quality that they wouldn't look out of place in a home today. Yet examine the artifacts from a few centuries later, those left by the Saxons, for example, and the hapazard quality, the crudeness, as if they were made by a race of retarded children, is shocking. It is as if humankind had suffered a bout of collective amnesia and forgotten nearly everything it had once known.

That was the legacy of barbarism, and though it is tempting now to forgive and forget — after all, only a thousand years later we had the glories of the Renaissance — it's best to keep in mind that the intervening years saw Europe's population cut in half by endemic disease and warfare, and that if it weren't for a few enclaves where Roman and Greek culture survived, the raw materials on which the Renaissance was constructed might have been lost forever.

It's almost a truism to point out the similarities between America and Rome. Both empires were built on conquest, slavery and plunder, and both rose far beyond those sordid beginnings. Both were convinced that their way of life was manifestly superior to all others, and both felt it was their divinely-ordained mission to spread that way of life throughout the world. Both empires were also very inclusive: though they viewed outsiders as culturally inferior, they did not consider that inferiority to be a permanent state. One could, through loyalty and service and education, become a Roman or American citizen. Even former slaves were able to elevate themselves in this way.

For a long time, this system worked very well. America and

Rome grew rich with the cultural diversity that comes from being nations of immigrants. But at some point, this changed, the balance shifted. Allegiance to the state or nation ebbed away, and was replaced with a resurgent tribalism. Exactly why this happened is a question that has kept historians in business for many centuries. One of the earliest and most exhaustive — and sometimes exhausting — examinations of the subject remains Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman*

Empire, published in 1776, almost simultaneously with another of modern civilization's cornerstones, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*.

I turned to Gibbon to try and answer a question that has been puzzling me of late. It's not so much that barbarism has been gaining a new lease on life; in fact, it probably never went away. One cynic even claims that "It is a very thin line that divides over-civilization from barbarism." But what I couldn't figure out is why intelligent and idealistic people are prepared to excuse and in some cases even embrace barbarism. The anti-technology, neo-primitivist ravings of John Zerzan, for example, are a recipe for barbarism, and the Black Bloc stormtroopers inspired in part by his theories are not far removed in spirit from Alaric and his Visigoths. I hesitate to make that comparison, because they'll probably take it as a compliment. And there's one significant difference, which is that the modern Visigoths are not interlopers from outside the empire, but, for the most part, educated and prosperous citizens from within.

That's what I was searching for in Gibbon. Was there any similar phenomenon in ancient times? Did middle-class Romans

It could be argued that civilization itself creates barbarians. It is certainly true that barbarians could not exist without a civilization to prey upon.

HIT SQUAD

form support groups proclaiming "Equal Rights For Barbarians"? When the Huns were raping and looting their way across Italy, did Roman liberals defend them on the grounds that they were oppressed, and besides, "We don't have the right to judge their culture by our own standards and values"? I didn't find anything quite like that, but I did find the answer I was looking for. Gibbon blames the rise of Christianity for many of Rome's troubles, on the grounds that the Christians, caring only for the afterlife, abandoned their responsibilities as Roman citizens. Believing that the world would soon end, and that the physical world was something to be endured, not enjoyed, they saw no point in defending the empire or doing anything to sustain it. In their view, the impending collapse of civilization was a glorious event, because according to the Bible, it was a sign that Jesus would soon return.

And there, I thought, was the key. No, it's not the Christians; today's Christians, completely unlike their ancient counterparts, are more interested in controlling the world than withdrawing from it. But there is a growing cult of utopians, dystopians, radicals, fanatics, and true believers who serve the same function today as Christians did in ancient Rome. They share no single ideology; they run the gamut from communists to anarchists to fascists to nihilists, from tofu-munching hippies to surly drunken crusties. What unites them is that they all, as Seneca observed,

Perhaps this is an inevitable and irreversible process.

prefer belief to judgment. And central to that belief is the notion that the world as it now exists is so corrupt, so unfair, that they would rather see it destroyed than go on as it is. It is in this way that they become the allies of barbarism. Not because they are barbarians themselves — though in some cases their failure to exercise judgment and self-discipline will reduce them to that state — but because they no longer consider the values and duties of a civilized society to be worth their while.

Perhaps this is an inevitable and irreversible process. Perhaps nations and empires, like individuals, grow old and die, and there is nothing that can be done about it. But accepting that melancholy possibility is one thing; to welcome it, to revel in it, even to try to hasten its arrival, is quite another.

I am not sure these words will change the mind of Jose Palafox or the others who share his views. If anything, my analogy between Rome and America may harden their resolve. After all, his native country could, without stretching a point, be seen as a semi-autonomous province of the American Empire, an empire whose rule has often been far from benign. But I hope he, and others who would change the world, will consider Gibbon's words cited at the beginning of this column. Within them is a prescription for a life well-lived within society. There is latitude for both a radical and a conservative approach to that life. I don't expect Palafox to abandon his radicalism, but I'm hoping he might see that his goals of justice and equal opportunity stand a far better chance of being realized in a stable and secure society than in one coming apart at the seams. ⊕



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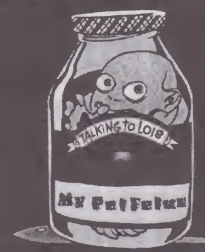
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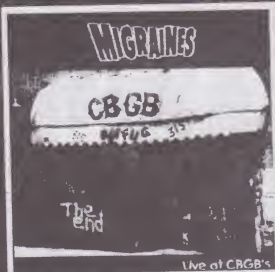
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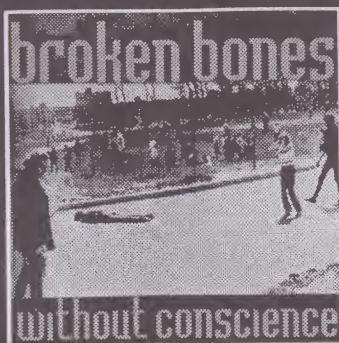
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"4"

hard to talk about music in general, and it's hard to talk about your band, because I admit, sometimes all we wanna do is nothing but make a ton of racket," says Rocket From the Crypt leader John "Speedo" Reis. Proof? Check "Nobobby" from 1999's *All System's Go 2* odds 'n' sods compilation on Reis' recently-

launched Swami imprint (run through Sympathy For the Record Industry). It's a cacophonous roar of horns and loping beats, the sound of an elephant suffering a fatal but prolonged heart attack. If that track was all you'd ever heard from RFTC, you'd be convinced that they were the most untalented, atonal band since, well, what's the worst Sonic Youth song you've ever heard?

Not much has been heard from Rocket over the last couple of years — suprisingly — since in the space of a decade they've unleashed an ungodly amount of product — and that's foregoing mention of the various members' side projects. Outside of RFTC, Reis is best known for his role as guitarist for the late, much-lamented noise-fuck group Drive Like Jehu. Last year he

head • flash • death

rocket from the crypt return

WORDS AND PICTURES BY SLUTSHIP COSINE*

MYSTERY BOYS: L TO R:
Apollo 9 (Paul O'Beirne),
JC2000 (Jason Crane), Petey X
(Pete Reichert), Ruby Mars
(Mario Rubalcaba), N.D. (Andy
Stamets), and of course,
Speedo (John Reis).



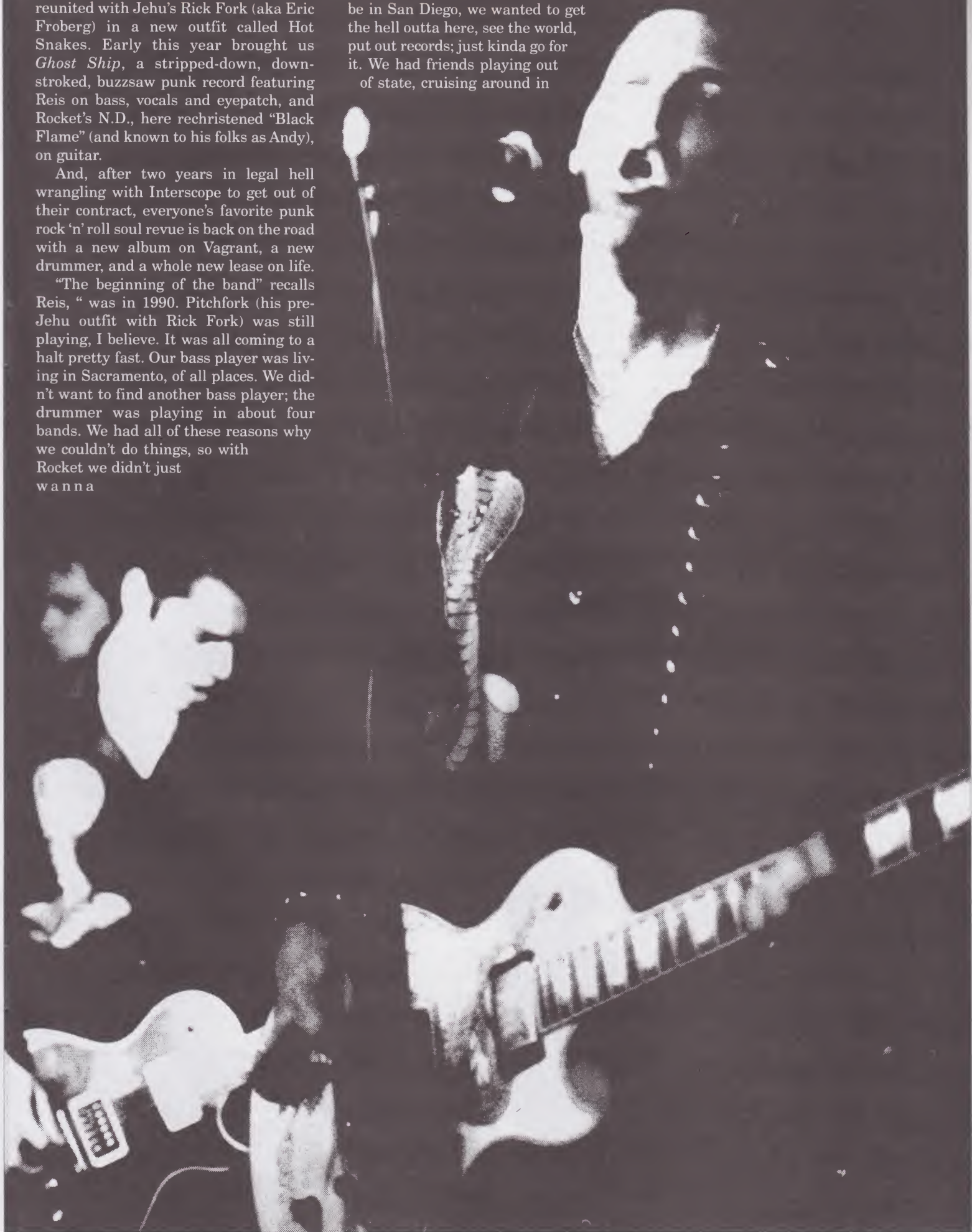
*AKA DAVE JOHNSON

reunited with Jehu's Rick Fork (aka Eric Froberg) in a new outfit called Hot Snakes. Early this year brought us *Ghost Ship*, a stripped-down, down-stroked, buzzsaw punk record featuring Reis on bass, vocals and eyepatch, and Rocket's N.D., here rechristened "Black Flame" (and known to his folks as Andy), on guitar.

And, after two years in legal hell wrangling with Interscope to get out of their contract, everyone's favorite punk rock 'n' roll soul revue is back on the road with a new album on Vagrant, a new drummer, and a whole new lease on life.

"The beginning of the band" recalls Reis, "was in 1990. Pitchfork (his pre-Jehu outfit with Rick Fork) was still playing, I believe. It was all coming to a halt pretty fast. Our bass player was living in Sacramento, of all places. We didn't want to find another bass player; the drummer was playing in about four bands. We had all of these reasons why we couldn't do things, so with Rocket we didn't just wanna

be in San Diego, we wanted to get the hell outta here, see the world, put out records; just kinda go for it. We had friends playing out of state, cruising around in



During their first or second living room show at Reis' house, the frontman suffered an unfortunate filling-sparking attack by an unruly attendee — “Ginny or George. I don't know. They're twins. Red-headed twins. She was the type who *always* got into trouble. I mean, yeah, it's a full-on party, but it's at *my* house, and I didn't want people being disrespectful. I think she walked away, and I threw the microphone at her. It hit her in the back — didn't hurt her, but she was really embarrassed. Everyone was laughing at her. There were about 100 people crowded around. [So she] got pissed off...went back to the kitchen and got a bucket. She's making her way through the

The living room-only clause fell quickly by the wayside, and in the ensuing ten years, Rocket's played everywhere and then some — from the Ché Café to the Hard Rock Café, from England's massive Reading Festival to the '96 Warped Tour. One of their stranger gigs involved rocking a mental health facility in San Diego. "It was cool," Reis says of the set. "This one guy who looked like Jesus Manson had diarrhea right in the middle of the dining hall where we played. We had a friend who worked there; he had a lot of the San Diego bands play there. I mean, we didn't get paid, it was just something cool to do."

“That was really hard. First we tried to appeal to local governments and sell it as this multicultural event. Incorporate bands not only of our ilk, but also bands from all over the world. A travelling show that would come to the center of the cities. Whereas other festivals were out in the boondocks, I wanted this to be something that came to the center of the city and it would be free. People could just come to the center of the city and watch these bands. There’d be more of a sense of community, because it would encourage people of all ages, not just hipsters. It was *really* hard work. I’m not talking about even trying to do it in San Diego, we wanted to do a whole *tour* like this. So then we tried to get some sponsors. The sponsors that we met with were like, “You’ve gotta play *this* city, you’ve gotta do *this*...” So we decided we’d scratch the idea rather than prostitute it. Basically, it came down to the fact that we weren’t a popular-enough band. If we were popular, we could have pulled it off. But the fact that no one



knew who we were made an ambitious project like that nearly impossible."

Which raises that burning question — just who the hell are these guys? I mean, on the new record it says that they're Speedo, Petey X, Apollo 9, N.D., JC 2000 and Ruby Mars. Reis calls the nicknames "fun. It's the license to be who you want to be." Okay, fine...but there's something *else* there, an otherworldly, vague, slightly unclassifiable quality that comes across on the records and in the live show. "I think vague is good, to a certain degree," posits John. "Punk rock was so digested by mainstream culture that they've put a definition on what it meant. And it's not *my* definition. I mean, we *live* in a democracy. That's why I always say we're a rock 'n' roll band. It's just vague. It's a way of not pigeon-holing yourself. "For me...punk was about *destroying* the 'Myth of Rock 'n' Roll'. It wasn't about superheroes up there on stages in huge fuckin' boots playing guitar solos. Punk was about seeing the band in the crowd during the other band."

And here's where the oft-quoted line from *Scream! Dracula, Scream!*'s liner notes comes in — "Rocket From the Crypt is contradiction and lies." How can one simultaneously embrace the inherent pomposity of the r 'n' r spectacle without having it swallow you whole? After unleashing *Raw Power* on the world, Iggy went cavorting about Berlin with Bowie, wallowing in decadence and becoming a rock 'n' roll caricature in the process. Post-*Appetite for Destruction*, Waxl Rose, if he wasn't already, transformed himself from what Reis refers to as "a stupid, racist hick motherfucker from the sticks who moved out to Hollywood and probably sucked dicks on Santa Monica Boulevard just so they could record their first tapes," into a stupid, racist hick living an obscenely lavish

and perverse rock 'n' roll cliché. When conversation turned to Ronnie James Dio (as it invariably does when I'm involved), John commented, "Yeah, I guess [I can respect him]. In the same way that I respect people who are consummate professional musicians who go out there in a vaudevillian sort of way and give the crowd their money's worth. He comes across as an Artist Walking on Pillows, like 'This is my Universe. Welcome to it.' [Though] I can't stand his music."

Still, though Paul may not slay dragons with his sax and Jason may not shoot fire from his trumpet, there's certainly an element of spectacle to Rocket. Reis is up there, all consummate showman, one third James Brown, one third Elvis Presley, and one third punk-rock, huckster Liberace — "Rocketfromthecrypt! Hardestworkingbandinshowbusiness! Let's givutupfortheband! I am *horny* for your applause..." — while Andy, Petey and Mario hammer the high hell outta their instruments. And all of their shirts *match*. Undeniably punk, but somehow professional, yet certainly not Professional Punk.

John: "Professional, yes. I am a professional rock 'n' roller. But *never* would I be one to put myself up on a pedestal. There is a portion of what we do that's just fun. That's all it is. It's just *fun*. Hypocrisy and contradiction are two valuable traits in our band. We use those as a valuable force. But when it comes right down to it, it's about doing what you do. Being comfortable on stage and putting on the kind of show that we would like to see when we go out. The Dead Kennedys did the same thing. I mean, Jello Biafra was a fuckin' showman. Or you'd go see the Dickies. There was a *show* involved. And then somewhere along the line, it was just like, "Turn your back on the audience and just

not give a shit.' Which isn't my scene. Because I *do* care. I *do* care about the people who come and see us. And I respect them. And I show my respect by fuckin' trying to be the best rock 'n' roll band on the planet. I *do* value the fact that they drop ten dollars on a show. Part of it *is* escapism. During the Depression, you had these movies of people living this lovely, leisurely life because the only way to keep people from basically killing themselves was for them to live vicariously through this fantasy world. So there's a part of that in what we do. And I *do* think there's a Depression in music right now. Rock 'n' roll in Blackface, y'know? It's been dumbed down. Irony is killing *all* music. Everything has just become such a cliché, such a *parody* of itself. It's totally stripped these things away from it. Everything that was important to *me* in getting into punk rock music is absent. So therefore, there was no longer any use for me in that genre. I'm talking about what I see at large. Magazines, the occasional show I catch. This whole "Rock 'n' Roll Revival" — there are some great bands who are kickin' ass and keepin' it true, but there's also a lot of bullshit. Basically, cock rock on a small stage. That's the reason why I got into punk in the first place. To steer clear of that world, not to be a part of it. Sexism is *cool*? This whole anti-PC wave that's starting to break. It's been swelling for a while, but now too many people are ignoring a bunch of cool, important things. I think people are *slowly* evolving and becoming more civilized. To kinda go backwards is just such a shame. It's just a total drag."

Then again, RFTC was once hammered by World-Renowned Rock Crit Gina Arnold for bringing a stripper onstage at the Berkeley Square to celebrate Paul's birthday. Of course, Ms. Gina once wrote that the Mr. T Experience and Rancid had been together the same amount of time, so there's a *distinct* possibility that she just didn't quite get it. (Also, she recently wrote RFTC had been together since 1988 and referred to the band's namesake as "Rocket From the Tomb" Somebody please find this woman a fact-checker and a fucking *clue*, stat!) Reis *understands* the fine line between dumb and stupid, the lines between sex, sexy and sexist; the short distance between packaged and marketed, and he navigates them with finesse. Who else would put out what was essentially their major-label debut (*Circa: Now!* was originally



released on Cargo) and then rip off semi-obscure SF punk legends Crime for the lettering on the album? "[We] directly lifted [the type on *Scream! Dracula, Scream!*]. There's only so many letters, so we had to make the rest. [Crime] had such great graphic design. I like bands like that. Bands like the Music Machine, Misfits, Black Flag. They come with not just the music, but this whole universe that surrounds them, as well. It's a fully-realized form of expression, y'know? They have this world where there's just so much to grab ahold of. It's about self-expression. You look at a record cover, it's *not* something you need to have done by a deadline, it's another outlet. None of *us* are artists. But none of us are musicians, either. We're just kind of makin' it up as we go along." Yeah, right, listen to something like "Eye on You" or the Latin stomp of "You Gotta Move" from '98's *RFTC*, check out the arrangements and the playing (both basically recorded *live*, mind you) and tell me these motherfuckers aren't *musicians*. Still, you can't help but half-believe Reis when he claims otherwise, either.

Interestingly enough, apparent contradiction rears its quizzical head again when the subject of Napster comes up. For a band that's given so much away for free — free entrance into the band's shows for life if you sport an RFTC tattoo, a 7" for tat-bearers only, a free tour (for which they sold much of

their equipment), etc. — Reis is decidedly anti-Napster. When I ask why, he replies, "Because it's *ours*. We should be able to give away stuff on our own terms, you know? I wholeheartedly condone home taping. Even burning things on CDs. It's like an underground network of people getting the word out there. I find out about some of my favorite bands that way. But then this computer program comes along and basically makes the attraction, "We're getting this stuff for free." And not only are they getting a cheapened version of it, because it doesn't sound as good, but the band has no control over the way their music is presented. We put together a CD, we package it, and we release it. Now there's no finality to it at all. It's just an entire catalog of music that you can just go and get. I think if a band doesn't want to be involved in that, they should have the power to say, 'I don't want that.' But you don't really have that power. It might be a contradiction, but I don't look at it that way."

"But a third-generation tape-dub sounds a lot worse than an MP3..."

"Yes, but I think the amount of resourcefulness that someone has to have, first to find someone and then to communicate, strengthens that network, as opposed to what you have with the computer, where you're totally disassociating yourself from any kind of contact whatsoever. I don't embrace the Computer Age. I realize it's just a tool, and for millions of people it makes their jobs so much easier and allows them to be more effective, but I still don't dig it. It doesn't seem very rock 'n' roll to me. I mean, I'm not *fighting it*. A lot of my feelings are based on reading other people's reasons for using it.

'The labels rip off bands, anyway. The only way bands make their money is by playing live.' This is a sixteen year-old, middle class kid in his bedroom, telling *me* what *I'm* doing? You do not *dictate* the way *I* release my music and the way *I* want *my* art to be presented. Accountability has been completely pushed to the wayside because you have that anonymity. It's almost like everything's *imaginary*, so you're not stealing anything. I would condone breaking into record stores and stealing our records before I would condone someone downloading it from Napster. At least they'll have the actual *record* you know? And they'll hear it the way it's meant to be heard. That seems more punk to me anyway.

"I've always said the band's about bringing people together and celebrating our similarities, as opposed to putting an emphasis on our differences. We're all human beings first. People forget that. Especially a lot of young people. They get swept up into this universe that's so much larger than themselves, which therefore gives them this power that's they feel makes them an authority on the subject. Just because it's liberating doesn't mean you know everything. Tolerance has always been a really big part of punk in general."

Tolerance and strife, to be sure, are part of punk's eternal conundrum — where do I lash out, where do I accept? What do I accept and why? And the lines have been drawn all over the place — how *ambitious* are you allowed to be, and in what ways? And can you still fit within that framework? If you step outside of it, are you still "punk"? What happened when the Clash started writing songs like "Train in Vain"? And ultimately, how much does it really matter?

John explicates: "Everyone in the band is into *music*. Not just rock 'n' roll, and not just punk rock, but all kinds of music. I mean, I love the Ramones, but I don't want to make the same record over and over and over again. I think evolution is the most important part about being in a band; pushing yourself, being creative, obviously having a great time.

I think that's a very punk rock thing,

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y'know? No Rules. Having our agenda be purely a musical agenda. So what? We go for it sometimes. We're ambitious."

Ambitious enough that they felt no shame in reaching for the tarnished brass ring of major-label-dom. Though they now look at their time with Interscope as something that ultimately led to the band's greatest setback, at the time it seemed like the right thing to do. Working in college radio back in '95-96, I remember the barrage of promo material we received for *Scream! Dracula, Scream!* I often heard "Young Livers" on the local alt-rock radio station, and occasionally caught "Born in '69". By '98, when *RFTC* was released, the only Rocket I heard on the radio was one spin of "Break it Up" on 91X in San Diego — during that vacation, I heard Sprung Monkey (another SD band) at least fifteen times on the same station. The *RFTC* record was basically buried. On that situation, Reis has this to say, "I feel that we were lied to. We were told they didn't really dig the record, but that even though they didn't like it, they'd still work it. Our relationship with them was like, 'Here's the record, put it out.'"

Andy chimes in, "The label that *that* record came out on wasn't the label that we signed to. It was [initially] very small and we had people there that were friends." In fact, Interscope was the first


of the major labels that descended upon Rocket in the San Diego feeding frenzy of the early nineties (a brief period between the major-label "Sign 'Em All, Let the Charts Sort 'Em Out" Plunder of Seattle and the similarly-motivated Pillage of the East Bay).

Recalls Speedo, "We were approached by *every* fucking label in the world. It's the whole domino theory. You get one label interested, and then they all follow suit. All of these people's jobs revolve around them finding new bands to prey upon. And we were the object of desire for a couple of days. We had *everybody* calling us. We never did *anything*. We never *catered* to any of them in any possible way. I was working at Cargo at the time. We'd get calls from people at Sony. I'd answer the phone. I'm the shipping guy in this small company. They're like, 'Hey, we really like this band Rocket From the Crypt,' they don't know that I'm *in* the band, 'We wanna check out some copies! Can you please send us a couple copies of the record?' And I'm like, 'Fuck you! You can go *buy* one.'

"We never kissed *anybody's* ass. When it came time to sign with Interscope, they were the first ones who were even *into* us. A lot of it had to do with this woman who worked there named Anna, who still remains pretty much the band's best friend. She was really cool, and

totally impressed us with her musical knowledge and her history — she was the first bass player in the Gun Club. She had a totally encyclopedic knowledge of not just punk, but all kinds of music. We really believed in her, and she really believed in us. So even when we were going through all of that contract and litigation and everything, we never bowed down to anybody. We had this contract that was hailed as 'The most freedom ever allowed in a contract. Michael Jackson doesn't even have this kind of freedom!' And then all of a sudden, it didn't mean shit. After you sign your name on the dotted line, you might as well throw the thing out the window. Other than the financial responsibility that they'd taken on, everything else is just completely moot. It doesn't matter. You're dealing with this huge bureaucratic system; you're not dealing with one person. Whenever you want to do something, you have to explain yourself to a million fucking people. And even then, you're explaining yourself to people who have no concept of a band wanting to be true to their ideas. And wanting to sell records, but not wanting to do it in a way that makes you look like fucking assholes. So it gets really frustrating, and that energy is energy that can be better spent writing songs and being creative."





**"The label that
[RFTC] came out
on wasn't the
label that we
signed to."**

-n.d.-

Finally, released from their contract with Interscope, but short a drummer, Rocket hooked up with Vagrant. Says Reis, "It was a similar thing [to how we ended up with Interscope]. Right after we were off of Interscope, they were the first ones that contacted us. Then we went and talked to a lot of other different people. Not only were they the coolest — Rich, who runs the label, has been into Rocket since our first record, so it's not like we had to explain what we're about. He had the same kind of life that we did. We could relate to each other, and most importantly, they gave us everything we wanted. They helped us with the building of our studio, and they helped us with the recording of the record so we could make it the way we wanted it. They said yes to *everything*. No complaints, y'know?" The thing is, Rocket never suffered the ignominy within the scene that Jawbreaker did for signing to a major. Or for that matter, the shit-talk that Rancid endured for even *talking* to Epic. "We never really made it anybody else's problem as to who we decided to do business with. Major labels and independent labels are actually more similar than they are different. They're designed

to profit off the selling of records. They're both businesses," insists John.

So what made him want to start one? Although the band had released the *Hot Charity* platter on their own Perfect Sound imprint, PS was never really a label, whereas Swami definitely is. Why a label, and why now?

"I think a lot of people think that putting out records is like giving birth. It's not that big of a deal. The Sultans record and the Hot Snakes record are not very well distributed — they're not in *every* record store, but if someone finds out about 'em they can track 'em down; they can find 'em. It's putting out records in a way that feels good; feels natural. There's no smoke and mirrors. I just kind of let the music speak for itself. I don't take out any ads, and I don't send out any college radio or magazine promos. I'm not saying I never will, but I just don't, because Rocket's done that in the past, and those records end up in used bins. I, for one, really don't like rock journalists. They're usually people who don't play an instrument. They usually don't know *nearly* as much about music as they should. There are no qualifications to be a rock journalist. Sometimes,

journalists are people who use these subjects solely to pontificate about themselves. It's just so *heinous*, y'know? I appreciate magazines that don't write bad reviews. If they don't like it, they don't review it. Because to me, that seems more honest about what *I* like about music and turning people on to it. I'm not gonna talk to you for an hour about a record that I hate, though *Forced Exposure* is an example of a magazine that writes really great bad reviews."

On paper, in lieu of any knowledge of their live prowess, songwriting ability, or explosive musicianship, the most impressive thing about this band is the sheer *volume* of material they've released (see attached discography). If Reis had merely put out all of these Rocket From the Crypt songs, that alone would be admirable. However, since he founded RFTC, he's also recorded three albums with Drive Like Jehu (the third record was never released), released a solo-esque LP under the moniker the Back-Off Cupids, done a 7" and an LP with the Sultans and, of course, released the widely raved-about *Automatic Midnight* with the Hot Snakes. I mean,

why not just do all of this stuff with Rocket? The musicians are certainly good enough and versatile enough to play anything he could come up with... "Because it'd be unfair of me to ask any more of these guys. There are people in the band who have lives. If I had it *my* way, I'd be playing every day, every second of the day. I don't like the silence. I need a constant flow of noise to accompany me; the soundtrack of my life."

The night before the interview, Jessie Tappis (Rocketname: Smokey Topless), Vagrant's publicist, was nice enough to let me crash at her pad. We'd had some great phone conversations in the midst of setting up the logistics of the piece, so when my place to stay fell through (after I was already practically cashless and in LA), she offered up her couch. As an added bonus, she's as cute as she is conversational. Sensational chick, and one of the few people working PR who actually lives up to her word. She and I stayed up late talking, trading relationship stories and silly scenester tales. Nobody to impress, just two kids about the same age, in the same business, regaling each other with industry gripes and triumphs. That kind of *immediate* contact you have with some people, you know? She pointed out that I seem to have a story for every song. Or a song for every story. That I'm a Soundtrack Boy. And I wondered, how much of that applies to Reis — is he writing his life's soundtrack? And if so, is it a filter for all of the sounds that he takes in? "I don't know...I think it's just sort of stream-of-consciousness. It's like my cat, who sits on the dryer when it's going because it's the warmest place in the house. I just kind of gravitate toward what seems right. It's rock 'n' roll. It's not jazz. It's supposed to be meaningful in its meaninglessness."

And in that sense, his abstract lyrical concepts can righteously be applied to the cowardly, insecure chuckleheads with hearts of diluted custard who rip stickers off of your car at midnight and write personalized "Fuck you" notes in the dirt on your hood in some sort of impersonal-yet-supposedly-meaningful, misguided eighth-grade-esque outpouring of "rage". When those dipshits are getting you down, you can always rant along with John, "Here's to you, human torch/You're so fucking lame" as a general-yet-brutally-specific "go-rim-yourself, I-hope-you-break-your-fucking-spineless-back-trying" anthem of defiance. And in the next breath, you can belt "I was made for you" to an ex-girl-

friend who left but still half-wants you with far more conviction, venom, warmth, righteous indignation and heart than any ditty by J Lo or P. Diddy. Reis writes a special kind of generic anthem of refusal. In short, Rocket songs do what the early rock 'n' roll songs of the fifties, for all their simplicity and

John, Jessie, and I gathered 'round a picnic table and chatted about exactly what *drives* John to do what he does. I asked him what compels him to make art, throw it at people, and see what sticks. "I don't really *throw* it at people, that's the thing. I don't know *why* I make it in the first place."



innocence, did — they mean *something*, but they're open-ended enough to mean what each listener needs it to mean, all while somehow managing to avoid sounding contrived. Neat trick.

Sitting in Balboa Park, planes groaning overhead, landing gear extended, ready to touch down at Lindbergh Field,

"You've got a drive to go on tour, you've got a drive to play, you even go out of your way to do *free* tours, so obviously there's a desire to be *heard* there. You'd like to sell a lot of records to have people *hear* what you're doing."

"But I don't look to see what sticks. I don't *evaluate*. I'm not like, 'This did

***“It’s rock ‘n’
roll. It’s not
jazz. It’s
supposed to be
meaningful in
its meaning-
lessness.”***

-speedo





well, we should do it again.' The record's done, it's available, it's a photograph. Playing these songs night after night is where the *life* is. Not to take anything away from the record, 'cuz I like the record, but it's *done*. It's already history. It's already the *past*. If I didn't plan on sharing it with people, I wouldn't go to a 24-track studio, I'd record it at home on my boom box."

Jessie chimes in, "When you look back on your body of work: Rocket, Hot Snakes, Sultans, Drive, Pitchfork, everything, are you proud of it?"

"No. I don't bask in anything because there's really nothing to bask in. I think I've done some cool songs, but it's always about the future. Right now, we have about seven new songs that we've written with Mario. I'm really excited about getting those to tape. The next record will be the first record where Mario was in the

band *before* we recorded it. That's what I'm more excited about. 'Proud' is such a weird word. I'm proud of the new record. I think it's cool. I think we did a good job. I'm more than happy to share it."

She continues, "If 'proud' is the wrong word, does it make you happy?"

"Yeah, kind of...but it's just that, well...we're not that *important*, y'know? It's not that I really wanna *be* important, it's just that I don't think we've ever done something that was really *considered* important."

"I disagree!"

"Maybe to a few people..."

"I know people who've picked up guitars based on picking up your albums."

"That's *awesome*! That's something we've always encouraged. We did this one goodwill series of shows where we had a raffle at every show and gave away a guitar. Guitar is *so* easy. I'm not trying

to force anyone here, but it's made me so happy. So I guess I *am* happy. Making music makes me happy. Not so much the fat catalog, but just making music, writing music, practicing. And yeah, I wanna share that with people. Pick up a guitar! See the world! It's a pretty easy ticket."

As far as influence goes, beyond the immediate effect of inspiring kids to pick up an instrument — maybe even to prove to horn-playin' punk rock high school band nerds that you don't have to join a ska band if you wanna rock out — Rocket's certainly left a wake of inspiration. Sure, "Dollar" (from *Circa: Now!*) was one of the first songs I ever learned on guitar, but beyond Rocket's influence, just look at the amount of bands Drive Like Jehu has inspired. And given time, the amount of bands that the Hot Snakes *will* inspire. The number one question I got from friends when I mentioned I was going to San Diego to interview Rocket was, "Dude! You *have* to ask Reis when Jehu's getting back together." So although I pretty much knew the answer, I asked anyway. The answer? "No. We had a whole record recorded that's never gonna come out."

"Why not?"

"Basically, some of the people in the band like some of the songs, and the other half of the band like the other songs, so we just decided it was better if it didn't come out."

"It's funny, because Jehu strikes me as one of those bands who are more popular now than they were when they were together."

"Yeah, totally. Nick Drake."

While one wouldn't normally think of Drive Like Jehu and Nick Drake together, both have become part of a legacy of music that time is only starting to catch up to now. The closest we're gonna get to having Jehu back are the Hot Snakes, which feature Reis on guitar (he sings one song on the album), Rick Fork on vocals and guitar, and Jason Kourkounis (of Delta 72) on drums. On the album, the bass slot was occupied by an organ. Live, low-end duties are filled by longtime Rocket collaborator Gar Wood on the four string. Frankly, I prefer the 'Snakes to Jehu — the songs seem more concise and less self-indulgent, and the vibe is inviting even as it's dangerous — some kind of oddly perfect melding of post-hardcore and garage rock. It's one of this author's favorite records of 2000.

On the other end of the spectrum are the Sultans. While the Hot Snakes are a manifestation of Reis' artier side, and Rocket can go from rock 'n' roll to exper-

imentally strange at the drop of a can of Murray's pomade, the Sultans are pure punk rock. Stripped down, fucked-up and noisy switchblades 'n' moonshine rock 'n' roll. Written and recorded in the space of a few days, *Ghost Ship* is a record that knocks most self-proclaimed "punk" bands' year-long efforts outta the water.

Taken individually, the bands appeal to a variety of audiences — r 'n' r types, punks, indie folks, and dare I say it, in the case of Hot Snakes and Jehu, *emo* kids. In fact, in 1998's band bio that accompanied the release of *RFTC*, Jehu is referred to a "unique mixture of math-rock and emo-core." Knowing that Reis penned the bio that accompanied *Group Sounds* (both are available for your perusal at the band's website, www.rftc.com), if he didn't write the '98 version, he at least approved it — in the process assuming *some* measure of responsibility for the wave of dreck nestled in the nether regions of backpacks across America. However, today, he says, "I don't understand why they would call [Jehu 'emo']".

"Whoever would've thought that listening to Rites of Spring, people would call it that? And *they* detested that term back then. I think it's 'imo'. Short for 'imitation'. People are really mispronouncing it. That's what I think it is. Remember Imo? The spread? And these kids! They look like Nazi Youth! It's just such a uniform. There's such a sameness.

"It's similar to when the whole straightedge thing was happening when I was already into punk. All of these California straightedge bands who were supposedly influenced by Minor Threat, their sound was much more like heavy metal. They were really militant, zero-tolerance crypto-fascists. It was very much a jock-male thing. These people would beat you up. These weren't *punks*, these were *jocks*. I think it's the same thing with what people who are into what we now call "emo". Now, I'm not going to pretend to be an authority on this, but when I'm at the record shop and people trade in their CDs, I'll put 'em on and listen to 'em. It doesn't seem like a logical progression from the "influences", it seems like it's much more derived from a kind of mainstream style. It sounds like it aspires to have that mainstream sheen. It's more pop music.

"I think emo, as a genre, is such a crime. I really do. A very powerful and tainted force. It *is* the Dark Force. There is *no* love there. *Emotional*? It has nothing to do with punk. It's trying to be the

kind of radio pap that gets shoved down people's throats."

As if Britney Spears wearing a shirt that proclaims "Rock 'n' Roll Forever" in one of the inside cover shots on *Oops...I Did It Again* wasn't enough, the rock 'n' roll revival is attracting a plethora of pretenders to the throne. Five years ago, Rocket was the lone rock 'n' roll band with any sort of profile to emerge from the indie-punk scene and make any sort of dent or ding in the mainstream consciousness, touring with bands like Rancid and Soundgarden, and occasion-

ally popping up on MTV. Now Joey Fatone of N'Sync shows up in *Entertainment Weekly* sporting a Misfits shirt. What's a dyed-in-the-wool, over-thirty rock 'n' roller to do in the face of this ignominious appropriation? "I wanna be like [the Lazy Cowgirls]. I wanna be old and playing rock 'n' roll. Rock 'n' roll is music of the young. The only way to play it successfully and age is to stay young. When you watch 'em play, they blow any band half their age off the stage. Same thing with Dead Moon. They're just lifers. There's some-



thing really appealing about that dedication to what they love to do.”

And what about Reis’ devotion to his chosen craft? “We’re not only dedicated to *preserving* rock ‘n’ roll, we’re also dedicated to its advancement. To the future. You’ve gotta build upon the DNA of rock ‘n’ roll...Stylistically, people came along after [RFTC] and adopted similar aesthetics. I think there are bands that have similar influences to this band, as well as that may have been influenced by Rocket From the Crypt. And that’s flattering. It’s just kind of a drag that the pieces that people pick up are only skin deep — the fact that we put grease in our hair and wear shiny clothes. We’ve gotten lumped in with this new group of people — this chain-wallet, bad tattoo, hot rod culture, which is a *very* small part of what we do. If you can say it’s part of what we do at all. I find that, stylistically, people get so hung up on the concept that they forget that there’s anything more to it — like writing really good songs. That’s what bands are supposed to do. They’re supposed to write good songs and play great shows. Anything on top of that is just gravy.”

While John may write the songs that make the indie kids dance, bassist Petey X actually handles the day-to-day business of the band. “He handles all of the getting paid. He’s pretty much always done that. He *likes* doing it. No one else really does. Even when he plays his bass, he’s like, “Oh, you mean that part four times and that part two times, and then five on that part,” where everyone else is like, “Yeah, I guess, dude.” He’s *very* numbers driven. As far as “What are we gonna do?” is concerned, John explains, “We take a vote. Unless it’s something so glaringly obvious that it’s not needed. It’s a large band, and that chain of communication is kind of a hard thing to keep up. I write the songs. I write *all* the songs. I write the lyrics. People have come up with parts here and there, but it’s not like I come to practice and am like, ‘Here’s the song from start to finish.’ Things are left pretty open. The people in the band are so good, y’know? It’d be *stupid* of me to think that I could come up with a better drum part than Mario could. The guy’s a fucking shredder. In the beginning, I was more of a dictator, ‘We’re gonna do this, we’re gonna do that,’ but that’s what got the band off the ground. But we’ve been a band for over ten years now. People need to have more control of their lives. Part of that is letting them become more a part of this, and the band

has changed, obviously.”

The biggest change, since the addition of Jason on trumpet after the recording of *Circa: Now!*, was the departure of longtime drummer Atom and the introduction of the semi-legendary Mario Rubalcaba, aka “Ruby Mars” (credit for Mario’s new Rocketname apparently goes to longtime San Diego scenester/Fender guitar booster, O. of Fluf). Mario’s light-on-its-feet-yet-heavy-handed thwack (he was the rhythmic powerhouse behind San Diego screamo pioneers Klikitat Ikatowi) is a perfect fit for the snap-’n’-start, piledriving nature of Rocket’s furious side, yet having played in the Blackheart Procession, the guy also knows how to lay back. Says John, “Yeah, Mario’s kick-ass. We’d admired him — I think his name came up pretty early on — but he lived in Chicago. Atom lives in Los Angeles. That distance put a strain on the band. Pall from Blackheart Procession ran into Andy and was like, “You should talk to Mario. He’s thinking about coming back to San Diego, he just basically needs a reason.” So Andy talked to Mario and he was like, ‘Hey, yeah. Let’s check it out.’

“We tried out fifty people from all over the world. Some of them were good, but even with the ones that were good it didn’t feel right. Immediately with Mario there was definitely the connection of having the same life experiences, including growing up in San Diego, even though we really just knew him by reputation only. We jammed with him and he was like, ‘Fuck, I wanna do this!’ So he moved out here.

“He’s into the sixties and psychedelic rock, as well as garage-punk. That’s not *all* he listens to, since he was also a one-time pro skateboarder.” Which, of course, brings to mind one Duane Peters, about whom Reis has a classic story: “We were on the Warped Tour with Duane. I didn’t really hang out with him much, because he was busy skateboarding, and I think he didn’t think we were Punk Rock enough. *Everybody* hated the stage manager for the whole tour. He was always barking orders, always pissed off. At the last show, Duane and a couple of his buddies [clandestinely] coughed up some fuckin’ mangravy into his protein shake, and the guy slurped it down. Pretty fuckin’ disgusting,” Reis adds with a satisfied smile.

I had to ask, “Did they ever tell him?”

“I think I’m telling him now.” [insert Jessie-and-Dave-dying-of-laughter-and-disbelief soundbite here]

So the drummer’s in place, a label has

been found, and what’s the result? *Group Sounds*, which may stand as their hardest-hitting LP to date. While *RFTC* was a departure off into the land of great songs, dicks-on-dogs, and all-night-dancing, *Group Sounds* arches its back and spits right in your eye from the get-go. The first track, “Straight American Slave” rears up and smashes down on you with all of the subtlety of a nuclear meltdown. If San Onofre ever goes hyper-critical, the soundtrack is already wrtten. While Jon Wurster of Superchunk sat in on drums for 3/4 of the album (RFTC’s had a long-standing relationship with Mac McCaughan’s Merge label, and Reis co-produced the ‘Chunk’s *On The Mouth* record), it’s the tracks featuring Mario that *really* hit you in the face. With the bass and drums recorded on a boom box (“It has to be one of the old-school ones with the line-out,” offers Andy), the two tracks (left and right) were then synched to the board at Westbeach to capture the ragin’ full-on guitar ‘n’ horn attack of Andy, John, Jason and Paul. I dare you to drive down Main Street this summer with the windows down and *Group Sounds* crankin’ on the stereo and *not* feel more badass than any of the bro-hams rockin’ Slim Shady on their systems.

And though Mister Mathers may play the bad-boy role, he pales in comparison to the man Reis claims was a primary inspiration to the writing and recording of the album: “There’s a lot of G.G. on this record. There was a lot of praying to the altar of G.G. I consider him to be just an *amazing* rock ‘n’ roller. Great songs. I guess you kinda had to see him to appreciate it. He was *not* all talk. People make movies about Andy Kaufman because he fucked with people. *No one* fucked with people more than G.G. Allin. He *literally* transformed himself into the world’s most dangerous rock ‘n’ roll animal. He wanted to elevate that *art*. And I think he *did* do that. He wasn’t an idiot. He took things to such an extreme that I think you have to appreciate him on the basis of that alone. He was a *martyr*. I don’t really go for martyrs, but he was a total fucking martyr, and it’s sad that he died the way he did because it puts him in the territory of, ‘Oh, he was just a stupid junkie,’ y’know? I don’t think he was. He was a definite fucked-up dude, but he was definitely more artistic than Sid Vicious. I used to like Henry Rollins for the same reason when I was younger. He was just so *dangerous*. He seemed so *lethal*. I don’t know who’s next. No one else is *willing* to go as far as G.G. did.

So say, after reading this article, you've decided you simply *had* to own everything the band's ever done. Compiled by RFTC Web Lackey Bill Liftin, here's a list of every known RFTC single, split, EP, album and bootleg he's aware of. Even then, there could be others. To keep the list up to date, check out the discography page at www.rftc.com and submit any missing releases you know of to web_lackey@rftc.com. And well, if you're collecting fiend, uhh...good luck.

Albums / EP's

Paint As A Fragrance Headhunter, February 1991
 Circa: Now! Headhunter, November 1992 (reissued)
 Interscope, May 25th 1993
 All Systems Go (Japanese Version) Toy's Factory, February 1993
 All Systems Go Headhunter, 1993/(reissued) SFTRI, 1998
 The State Of Art Is On Fire SFTRI (10" LP), April 1st 1995/SFTRI (CD), November 12th 1996
 Hot Charity Perfect Sound, August 8th 1995 (UK) Elemental, 1995
 Scream, Dracula, Scream! Interscope, October 10th 1995 (UK) Elemental, 1995 (Japan) Interscope, 1997 (Australia) Interscope, 1997
 RFTC Interscope, June 2nd 1998 (UK) Elemental, 1998 SFTRI (LP), 1998
 All Systems Go II Swami (CD), October 26th 1999/Swami (2xLP), April 2000
 "Cut Carefully And Play Loud" Flapping Jet, November 16th 1999
 Group Sounds Vagrant, March 6 2001

Singles

Rocket Pack (7") Pusmort, September 1991
 Yum Kipperd (7") Helter Skelter, June 1992
 Boychucker (7" picture disc) SFTRI, June 1992
 Normal Carpet Ride (7") Sub Pop, June 1992
 Gold (7") Drunken Fish, July 1992
 Special Glow Sleeve - (split 7" w/ Septic Death) Pusmort, August 1992
 Smells Like Grease For Peace - (split 7" w/ Deadbolt) Standard Recordings, October 1992
 Both Good Songs (7") Merge, April 1993
 Pure Genius (7") Drunken Fish, 1993
 Call It A Complex (split 7" w/ Radio Wendy) Pusmort, 1993
 Ghetto Box Rock (7") Snap Crackle Punk, 1993
 Ghetto Box Rock (7" repress) Snap Crackle Punk, 1993
 Boychucker (7" repress) SFTRI, 1994
 Burn Mouth Off Liar With Punk Heat Blast (7") Merge, 1994 (repressed 1998)
 split with Blood Thirsty Butchers (2x7") Pusmort, 1994
 RFTC Plays The Music Machine (5" / 7") SFTRI, 1995 (re-issued 1996)
 Tattoo (7") Perfect Sound, 1995
 I Flame You (7") Perfect Sound, 1995
 Born In '69 (CD / 7") Elemental, 1995
 Young Livers (CD / 7") Elemental, 1996
 On A Rope (triple CD) Elemental, 1996
 "Used" / "Lose Your Clown" (7" tattoo single #2) Dinked, 1996
 When In Rome (Do The Jerk) (shaped picture disc) Elemental, 1998
 Lipstick (2 CD / 1 7") Elemental, 1998
 Lumps - (split 7" w/ Julian Briano Y Sus Hermanos) Vinyl Communications, 1998
 Break It Up (2 CD / 1 7") Elemental, 1998
 Dolorean (split 7" w/ The Hellcopters) Gearhead, October 1999
 Dancing Birds (7") Glazed, December 1999
 (split 7" w/ The Get Up Kids) Vagrant, 2000

Radio Promos

Circa: Now! (advance radio promo) Interscope, 1992
 "Ditch Digger" (radio promo) Interscope, 1992
 "Sturdy Wrists" (radio promo) Interscope, 1993
 Scream, Dracula, Scream! (advance radio promo) Interscope, 1995
 "Born in '69" (radio promo) Interscope, 1995
 "On A Rope" (radio promo) Interscope, 1996
 "Young Livers" (radio promo) Interscope, 1996
 RFTC (advance radio promo) Interscope, 1998
 RFTC Euro Album Sampler (radio promo) Elemental, 1998
 "Break It Up" / "Lipstick" (radio promo) Interscope, 1998
 "Lipstick" Promo EP (radio promo) Elemental, 1998
 "When In Rome (Do The Jerk!)" (radio promo)

Elemental, 1998

Compilations

Night Of The String — Agressive Skating Video BS Films, date ??
 VG4 — Agressive Skating Video date ??
 Airwalk's Guide To Music (Young Livers) date ??
 Pirhana Sampler (Born In '69) date ??
 Pirhana Sampler Part 2 - Music The Bites (On A Rope) date ??
 Absolute Pop (Born In '69) date ??
 Kerrang! Planet Rock CD2 : In Orbit (Born In '69) date ??
 Adventures In Music (Shy Boy) AIM-062 Cargo, 1991/92
 Pusmort View Toy's Factory, 1992
 Headstart to Puratory (Nail Biter / Battery Licker) Headhunter, 1992
 Happy Birthday, Baby Jesus (Cancel Christmas) SFTRI, 1993
 Hits Post Modern Syndrome #12 - Valentines Day With Tami and Dan (Hippy Dippy Do) 1993
 Album Network Tune Up # 18 (Ditch Digger) Album Network, May 1993
 CMJ New Music Volume 1 (Hippy Dippy Do) CMJ, July 1993
 Alternative Route '94 (Glazed) 1994
 Compulsiv For Two (Call It A Clue) Compulsiv, 1994
 Ether Hogg / Snivelization (Lumps, Rise From The Dead) SFTRI, 1994
 5 Rows Of Teeth (Ufo Ufo Ufo) Merge, 1994
 Album Network Tune Up # 26 (3CD — Ditch Digger) Album Network, March 1994
 Various Yanks: American Pie (Pigeon Eater) Rubber (Australia), 1995
 Taste (Cut It Loose, On Living & Dying, Glazed) Bacteria Sour, October 3rd 1995
 CMJ New Music Volume 29 (Young Livers) CMJ, January 1996
 Difinitiv BEAT 03.96 (Born In '69) 1996
 "Take A Trip" NME/Virgin Compilation (Ball Lightning) Virgin (UK), 1996
 The Best... In The World... Ever! (2CD — On A Rope) Virgin (UK), 1996
 Evening Session Priority Tunes (2CD — Born In '69) BBC (UK), 1996
 Alternator (On A Rope) Dino Entertainment (UK), 1996
 Turn It Up & Pass It On: Vol 6 (On A Rope) Aim Marketing, 1996
 Shine 6 (On A Rope) Polygram (UK), 1996
 The Dogs ...! (On A Rope) EMI TV (UK), 1997
 Dope Guns -n- Fucking In The Streets Vol. 11 (Tiger Mask) Amphetamine Reptile, 1997
 Dope Guns -n- Fucking In The Streets Vols. 8-11 (Tiger Mask) Amphetamine Reptile, 1997
 Their Sympathetic Majesty's Request (Boychucker) SFTRI, 1998
 Interscope 98 (Lipstick) Interscope, 1998
 CD Warehouse / Howlin' Kitty (Lipstick) 1998
 No Brakes - Summer Sampler 98 (Dick On A Dog) Interscope, 1998
 CMJ New Music Volume 60 (Break It Up) CMJ, August 1998
 Radio 1 Sound City (Lipstick) NME/BBC, 1998
 Lose Your Illusion I (Break It Up) SRH Productions, October 6th 1998
 Halloween Hootenanny (I Drink Blood) Geffen/DGC, October 13th 1998
 Squeal Of Blurr #2 (Watusi '98) Blurr Records (Germany), January 1999
 Oh, Merge (Man Down) Merge, July 1999
 Before You Were Punk Vol. II (This Way Out) Vagrant/Caroline, August 24th 1999
 Kiss The Cook (Who Needs You) August 31st 1999
 Converse All-Stars Sampler Interscope, 1999
 St. Valentines Day Massacre (Dick On A Dog) Melody Maker, 1999
 Runnin' On Fumes (Dolorean) Gearhead, April 2000
 West Memphis Three (Wrong and Important) 2000

ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT DISCOGRAPHY

Soundtracks

Mad Love (Glazed) Zoo Entertainment, 1995
 Supercop (On A Rope) Interscope, July 30th 1996
 Desert Blue (On A Rope) BMG, June 1st 1999
 Loose Change (Heads Are Gonna Roll) Surfdog Records, January 2000

Bootlegs

Superride 45 (7") 1993
 Rocket Queen EP (Original) (7")
 Speedo's Classics (Crunch), 1995
 Rocket Queen EP (Checkered) (7")
 Speedo's Classics (Crunch), 1995
 In The White Room (With Black Curtains) (7") Brand New Bag Records, 1996
 Star Search (7") 1996
 Radio and TV Broadcast from the UK (12") 1996
 Radio and TV Broadcast split w/ live Misfits (12") 1996
 Apeshit at the BBC (CD) 1998

Other Bands The RFTC Guys Have Been (or are) In:

9000 Pounds (Petey X)
 A Day Called Zero (JC2000)
 Back Off Cupids (Speedo, JC2000)
 Beehive & the Barracudas (ND, JC2000)
 The Black Heart Procession (JC2000, Ruby Mars)
 Claremont Rats (Petey X)
 Clikitat Ikatowi (Ruby Mars)
 Conservative Itch (Speedo)
 Crankshaft (Atom)
 Custom Floor (Atom)
 Drive Like Jehu (Speedo)
 Hot Snakes (Speedo)
 Loader (JC2000)
 The Oily Seniors (Ruby Mars)
 Pitchfork (Speedo)
 Pumphouse (Petey X)
 Rice (JC2000 and Apollo 9)
 Socially Insecure (Petey X)
 Stacatto Reads (JC2000, Speedo)
 Sub-Society (Petey X)
 Sultans (Speedo, ND)
 Thingy (Ruby Mars)
 Total J. Crane Maneuver (JC2000)

Misc Appearances by the RFTC Guys:

Helicopter - The Trombino Sessions
 Negative Records, 1992
 "Death Of The Queen Bee" Produced by John Reis
 Crankshaft - Head Start To Purgatory Comp
 Headhunter/Cargo, 1992
 "Elanor" Produced by John Reis
 Custom Floor - Clear Day LP
 Analog Sound Recordings, 1993
 Produced by John Reis & Custom Floor
 Superchunk - On The Mouth
 Matador, 1993
 Produced by John Reis & Superchunk
 Fishwife - Ritalin
 Headhunter, 1994
 Backup vocals by John Reis
 GoGoGo Airheart - The Things We Need
 Overcoat, 1999
 Trumpet by Jason Crane
 No Knife - Fire In The City Of Automatons
 Time Bomb 70930-43529-2, 1999
 Sax on "Short Term Memory" by Paul O'Beirne
 The Meices - Dirty Bird
 Polygram 828681, 1996
 Drums on "Wow" by Apollo 9



When I saw him, the first thing he did was walk out onstage buck naked. He threw a bottle at someone and hit them in the head. He was throwing bottles, chairs — broke every mirror on one wall. Blood everywhere. Somehow all the toilets overflowed. It smelled *so* bad. He was swingin'. It's not that violence is so cool, but if you go to see G.G., you know what the show's about. There was no one there who had no idea what he was about and just decided to go up to the front of the stage and hear a couple of songs. But it wasn't like *Jerry Springer*, it was for *real*.

"We wanted it to be all over the place," says John of *Group Sounds*. "We didn't want it to adhere to any one kind of sound. We wanted it to be an exciting listen. So that's why we went and recorded it in four places." Appropriately enough for a band who've spent as much as they have on hair grease over the years, five tracks were recorded in Memphis, TN. Rumor has it that Speedo recorded his vocal track on "Ghost Shark" at Elvis' grave. An aching, surreally atmospheric number, I *believe* it's

the longest track Rocket's ever recorded, and an eerie, menacing close to an angry-yet-upbeat record. My personal favorite moment comes early — during "Straight American Slave" the band cuts out, and a lone guitar wails a redux of the hammering double-stop bend that opens the track, but instead of releasing the bend and bringing the band back in, it falls apart utterly, pick clinking rapidly and uselessly across the strings. A moment of silence, please. Thankyouverymuch. Then the drums, bass, guitars, and horns all *slam* back in at the same moment. It's the musical equipment of James Brown falling onto his back and then springing back up just as the band kicks in again. It's practically everything that's great about this band distilled into under ten seconds. Of the moment, John explains, "Most bands would use it to show what they could do. I think we're more attracted to the sound of crappy stuff. Broken things, y'know? Machines on the brink of malfunction, rattling to the point where it just sounds like the whole thing is gonna combust."

Combustion. Ignition. The point at

which it all blows up, melts down, or just falls apart. Sound for sound's sake. The transmutation of that sound into something that actually constitutes a song. A song that fits the archetype of rock 'n' roll perfectly, while simultaneously smashing it to bits. Contradiction, lies, instinct. The perfect sound of a special forces platoon of rock 'n' roll swamis conjuring up a venomous brew of good-time party music. Rocket From the Crypt encompasses all of these points, some of them contradictory, all of them oddly perfect. John Reis may not know *why* he does what he does, but there are an awful lot of us out there who are grateful that he's doing it. I racked my brain over the guy for a month or two and still wasn't able to figure him out, pin him down, or otherwise peg him. When I let go and just took in his words, his recordings and his writing, it finally hit me — John Reis is human. John Reis is Punk. ☙

For more on Rocket From the Crypt, including tour dates, articles, interviews and news, check out www.rftc.com. For more info on musical incest in the San Diego scene, see www.atomjack.com.



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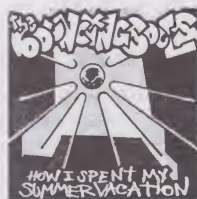
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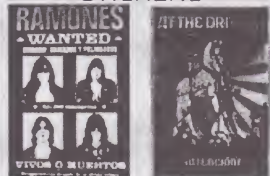


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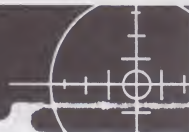
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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

I didn't change my name when I got married. I know that's not a very shocking or scandalous statement in the year 2001, and certainly not to *Hit List's* oh-so-jaded readership. But you might be surprised to learn that to some people it's an interesting topic, even in this day and age. Complete strangers feel the need to comment on it if they get wind of it, which is baffling to



me. A woman who works at our bank once remarked that I should "strongly reconsider" using my husband's last name because it would "make things much easier in the future for filling out paperwork." (Oh, well — anything for the sake of paperwork.) Sometimes I think that if I had suddenly decided to change my last name to Africa in my mid-20s, people would be less interested in that than in the fact that I didn't change my name when I got married.

To backtrack a little bit, I decided way before it was relevant in my life that I wasn't going to go that route. It wasn't then — and isn't now — any kind of political statement. I just decided that it was enough to get assigned a name at birth. I didn't want to go through a portion of my life getting used to a name that I didn't pick in the first place, only to switch at a later point to another name that I also didn't pick and then use that new one until my death. (It is kind of a strange concept, when you think about it.) Anyway, I made up my mind in high school that if I was ever to get married, that I wasn't gonna switch mine unless the guy happened to have some kind of really kick-ass last name like Lawless or Outlaw or something.

Since I'm quite stubborn when it comes to things I've already decided upon, years later I made good on that promise to myself. To be perfectly honest, I wasn't even all that fired up about the idea of marriage when I was actually faced with the reality of it many years later. It wasn't the commitment part that bothered me, since I was comfortable with the idea of spending the rest of my life with Larry and the whole giving-up-having-sex-with-men-other-than-him thing, but what I really wasn't into was the idea of giving up my identity and becoming Mrs. Someone Else

— even Mrs. Man Who I Want To Spend The Rest Of My Life With — because that's exactly what happens. When a woman gets married she's no longer Jane Smith (or whatever) in the eyes of the government and society at large, she's Mrs. John Doe. Yes, even by today's modern standards. The reality is that when you are a married woman, people address you directly and don't use your name. It is so rude. (Can you men out there imagine how annoying that could be on a regular basis? No, of course you can't; but trust me, it's annoying.) Anyhoo, when Larry asked me and we eventually set a date and everything, I knew that at some point between then and the actual wedding I had to tell him that I didn't want to change my name. I spent hours working up a little speech in my head to explain to him why. To make a long story slightly less long, I never made the speech because when I actually sat him down to tell him, he interrupted my first sentence (which was something to the effect of "Honey, I know we're getting married and everything, but I don't want to change my name because...") with "I didn't really expect you to change your name. Why would you?" Of course, that boded very well for our relationship, and he at once scored points in his favor.

With other people, though, the explanation didn't go down that simple or easy. Take my Dad, for example. I've been married for over five years now, and to this day when my father is faced with the name thing, he makes comments like "Oh, you're still on that kick, huh?" Much like when I was a teenager, I just roll my eyes and ignore him. He means well but, as he likes to remind me when I go so far as to ask him why he cares, "that's just not how they did things in my day." Not to upset anybody, but my Dad isn't that much older than some of my fellow columnists, and a lot of what he and my Mom did regularly "back in his day" (like drinking before they were of legal age to do so, taking drugs, and have lots of unprotected sex outside the realm of marriage)

was probably not what he wanted me to do in the future. So I don't really think it's an issue of what was or was not "done in his day." My father is just an old-fashioned kind of guy. I think that the thought that Larry's parents might see my "rebellion" as some sign of poor upbringing bothers him much more

Not to upset anybody, but my Dad isn't that much older than some of my fellow columnists

than what name I actually go by. My Dad, at least, has some small right to comment on it. I'm an adult now and I don't have to listen to him — and I don't — but I respect him and appreciate the fact that he cares. Larry's Dad didn't seem to care much either way, but Larry's Mom sure did and she has found a convenient way to deal with the situation — she simply pretends that I did change my name. She sends us letters addressed to "Mr. & Mrs. Kay", and she occasionally says "Good afternoon, Mrs. Kay." to me when I answer the phone. (She's lucky that I recognize her voice, though, since I usually hang up on people who address me as "Mrs. Kay" — they're almost always bill collectors or phone solicitors.) Since I like Larry's mother, I don't make an issue out of it. She's elderly, and if it gives her some small pleasure to call me "Mrs. Kay"...whatever. I'm not gonna make a fuss in her case.

The most interesting thing about the whole subject, I think, is the way certain people react to the notion. Some people really just don't get it and feel they have to talk to me about it. I've found that if I give some kind of bullshit excuse, like "Well, I'm a writer and my earliest work was published under my maiden name, so I've kept it," people respond favorably. It calms them to think there's a simple reason behind it that they can grasp. Then it's like, "You go, girl!" But anything as simple as "I don't know, I just wasn't done being Leslie Goldman yet" is far too confusing and off-putting for them. They are convinced that it has some greater, deeper, hidden meaning; possibly, some secret feminist agenda. Little do these uneducated minds know that I could never be a true feminist, since I like penetration. (Hohoho, boy, can I crack myself up!) However, I am amused by the fact that the whole thing makes some people a little uncomfortable, and for that very reason I'm glad I didn't adopt his name. Let people think there's something insidious motive at work that lies behind my decision. I've got to work on giving a little wink for effect after my answers; it'll keep people on their toes. I do get annoyed when people bring it up and then harp on it, though, because it's not really that big of a deal and, even if it was, it's still no one else's fucking business. We humans spend way too much time poking our noses into the trials and tribulations of other people's lives. What possible difference could it make to anyone what I call myself? Within the overall scope of the universe, does it really matter that Jayne County has a penis and uses a woman's name? Does anyone really think that Rev Norb is a real Reverend (and not just some football/junk food-obsessed Midwesterner with a quick wit and strange clothes in his closet)?

LESLIE GOLDMAN

Sigh. I guess some people just have too much time on their hands and too little with which to occupy their minds.

Like a lot of people, I was surprised and saddened when I learned of Joey Ramone's passing. A few days before, Larry interviewed *Punk* magazine founder John Holmstrom for *C14*, and they each commented that bands like the Ramones would never make it into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame unless one of their members ended up dying. (I actually edited out that part out of the interview because I thought that if the rumors that were flying around at that time were true, and Joey Ramone really was dying from cancer, then that remark would be in poor taste — it probably still is, but *HL* readers love things that are in poor taste so it shouldn't be a problem to mention it here.) Anyway, I'm a Ramones fan and particularly a Joey Ramone fan. He was my very first rock'n'roll crush (unless you count my fascination with Joan Jett when I was 13, but I wanted to be her rather than make out with her — although, at this point in my life, making out with Joan Jett would be something I'd definitely be interested in.) At any rate, it was very sad news indeed. I never actually met him, but his death will nonetheless be a loss felt by all of his fans, as well as the more knowledgeable segment of the music world. R.I.P., Joey. ⊕

I'm the editor of Carbon 14 magazine. You can contact me at C14/PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125



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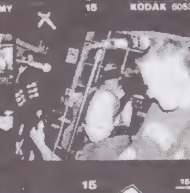
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Since many well-deserved tributes have been written about the death of Joey Ramone, I'll keep mine short. The Ramones were my first punk band. They helped put me on the path that I follow to this day. As tired as the phrase is, it's true — they actually changed my life. I had the pleasure of seeing them play live in San Francisco at the Kabuki Theater in 1983, at the Berkeley Square in 1984, and again in San Francisco at The Stone in 1987. When they performed live, they played their songs twice as fast as they did on their records, and it was exhilarating.

While I am on the subject, I am going to mention some of my other musical heroes who have died in the past ten years. Some of them got very little press during their careers, as well as when they passed away:

Charlie Rich was born in Arkansas in 1932. He played piano, sang and wrote music for himself and other artists. He recorded for Sun, Smash, Epic and other labels, and played a variety of music...rockabilly, country, pop, etc. He performed all of them very well, but his true talent was in the soul, blues and jazz genres. After he left Sun, he was marketed by record labels as a country artist, but he was always a rebellious misfit in that industry. He died in a motel room in Louisiana in 1995.

Jeffrey Lee Pierce, singer and guitarist of the Gun Club, was born in 1958. Through all the incarnations (and rotating group of band members), the roots-punk-blues Gun Club always remained his vision. He borrowed heavily from early blues artists like Skip James, Furry Lewis, Charley Patton, Howlin' Wolf, etc. He could not be called a thief, however, because in a roundabout way, he introduced their music to an audience that may have otherwise never been aware of it. He died in 1996.

Born in Mississippi in 1932, rockabilly pioneer Charlie Feathers recorded for Sun, King, Meteor and Kay Records. His frantic, hiccupping style was considered too demented even for the wild world of rockabilly in the 1950s, so he never achieved the commercial success that some of his Sun labelmates did. But that didn't affect how he felt about rockabilly, as he put it in 1987: "Most beautiful music I ever heard in my life". He died in 1998.

Ella Mae Morse was born in Texas in 1924. Her career began when she was still a teenager. An extremely versatile vocalist, she covered everything from jazz, swing, boogie, jump blues and R&B, to country boogie, rock 'n' roll and pop. In 1942 she recorded her most famous song, "Cow Cow Boogie". It was also the first hit for the new label she was on, Capitol Records. She had many more hits throughout her Capitol years, until she stopped recording in 1957. She died in California in 1999.

Soul singer James Carr was born in Mississippi in 1942. He began singing with gospel groups at a young age. In the 1960s he recorded soul records for Goldwax. His magnificent perfor-

mances on record reflected the pain in his personal life. A manic-depressive, he struggled with his demons and sometimes ended up in psychiatric hospitals. He died in Tennessee in 2001.

You should look for records or CDs by all these artists. You won't be disappointed.

On to reviews. I was pleasantly surprised by the Blue Flame Combo's CD, "Rockabillies Go Home" (Amp Records, 92 Kenilworth Ave. S., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8K 2S9/B.F.C. PO Box 48661, St. Petersburg, FL 33743 BLFLMCombo@aol.com). Despite the somewhat typical-

Hop, Skip and Jump by Devil Doll



rockabilly band name and CD cover art, the music is a unique combination of pop-punk, rock 'n' roll, rockabilly, and psychobilly. I like the stand-up bass, and the singer/guitar-player is very good. His singing style is a combination of rockabilly-smooth plus Billie Joe-ish punk.

Highlights: "Platinum", which has a nice punchy beat and breaks, as well as a showy, reverb-laden guitar solo; "Bobby Says", which reminds me of the Ramones' "Suzy Is A Headbanger"; "Paul's New Girlfriend", with its "whoa-whoa's" and handclaps; "Some Girls", which rocks...I like the way this guy sings; and "Bad Mouth", a Fugazi cover that this band truly makes their own. I was dismayed to find that the Blue Flame Combo covered a Smiths song on this CD. I hate that overrated whiner Morrissey (just because he has the hair, doesn't mean he's rockabilly) and his band (whose name is as boring as their music). There are three things that I wish for the Blue Flame Combo: 1. A better recording and mix on their next release, so the instruments

don't sound so isolated and have a more blended and fuller sound. 2. Improved artwork on their next CD. This one is so bad and low-budget, the insert doesn't even fit properly into the jewel case. It seems to be printed backwards, too! There is barely any information about the band (who plays what, etc.), and lyrics would be appreciated. 3. I hope they stay away from Smiths covers in the future! They could dig a little deeper for their influences. There is more out there than just the Ramones, Smiths, Misfits and Stray Cats. This goes for everyone — don't accept

I hate that overrated whiner Morrissey (just because he has the hair, doesn't mean he's rockabilly) and his band (whose name is as boring as their music).

just what is easily accessible or handed to you. There's nothing like the thrill of discovering an obscure artist or a kind of music that you didn't know existed before.

Dexter's LP "Snackhouse" is virtually unlistenable low-fi psychobilly/garage/blues/whatever (702 Records, PO Box 204 Reno, NV 89504 dexteramsterdam@hotmail.com). These guys are from Holland, and have some of the strangest song titles I've ever seen. The songs here are frequently off-rhythm, the guitar-playing often disintegrates into an unfocused mess, and the guitar is usually out of tune. Someone with a tambourine bangs away. They can't seem to decide what kind of music they want to do, so they end up trying to do too much. There is a song called "Dexter", which I think is really annoying. It seems so egotistical to have a song with the same name as the band, or vice versa. The first song and title track was recorded live, and I can't figure out why they included it on this record — it's an abrasive jumble of noise, so poorly recorded that the bar sounds almost drown

out the music. Of course, that's not necessarily a bad thing. "Donna" is just plain weird, with the singer making a lot of yelping noises throughout the song. "Alike Deer" has a bizarre title, with a sound to match — I wish I could understand the muffled lyrics, as I'm sure it would be interesting. "More Sex Hank" sounds more like an experimental noise project, although the singer is attempting a blues style. "Horse Gone" is more experimental arty noise crap, with some wanderings into blues and garage rock. "Contest Assistant"...what's with these titles? "Powdered Johnny"...hey, someone tuned the guitar for this one! More yelping, but this song is slightly more cohesive than the rest, which isn't saying much. A disaster, unfortunately.

Bear Family Records (PO Box 1154, D-27727 Hambergen, Germany www.bear-family.de) is one of my favorite reissue labels. The sound is always great, the notes in the booklets extensive and thoroughly researched, and they have lots of variety in music they put out. Their outstanding rockabilly compilation series, *That'll Flat Git It*, showcases a different label on each release. Volume 12, *Rockabilly From the Vaults of Imperial Records* (Various) is one of the best. It contains material from the later phase of rockabilly (1956-1959). By this time, the raw, primitive sound of earlier rockabilly had been replaced by slicker production, and a few of the tracks on this CD come closer to the commercial rock 'n' roll of the day ("Sweet Baby Doll" by Johnny Burnette, "Hey Baby" by Bill Lawrence, and "Kiss Me Sweet" by Johnny Garner). Highlights: "Bop Bop Ba Doo Bop" by Lew Williams is one of many songs written in the 1950s about school (hard to tell from the profound title, I know); "Please Give Me Something" by Bill Allen, is a tale of a guy trying to convince his girl to give it up before he goes away, "Please give me something to remember you by, just a little bit of something, so the love won't die" (yeah, I think I've heard that one before!)...the low, mumbly verses erupt into the lusty screams of the chorus, with lots of rhythm, lots of twangy guitar; "Hip Shakin' Baby" is an amazing song for two reasons: the first being that it com-

pletely rocks, the second being that it is sung here by R&B/Jump Blues star Roy Brown (the author of "Good Rockin' Tonight", which was a hit in for him 1947, as well as for Wynonie Harris in 1948, and Elvis Presley in 1954) — singing rockabilly was a departure for him (he is quoted in the CD booklet, saying "I was just doing it for the money...that kind of singing was alien to me"), but he pulls it off brilliantly, and in doing so reinforces the connection to Rhythm & Blues that rockabilly had; "Don't Wait Up", the only song on this CD by a female singer, and Laura Lee Perkins' performance is fabulous — a tough, sexy declaration of independence, "Put a light in the window, but don't wait up for me"; "Cat Talk" by Lew Williams is a bouncy rockabilly tune that tosses off the black and white slang/jive talk of the era and also has nice R&B and jazz undertones; another track by Williams, "Something I Said", has wonderfully expressive vocals and a killer guitar break; and "Rockin' By Myself" by Sammy Gowans tears along at breakneck speed.

Western swing singer/guitarist Jerry Irby had a lengthy career, beginning in the mid-1930's. The material on this CD, *Boppin' Hillbilly Series: Jerry Irby* (Collector Records, PO Box 1200, Oud Beyerland 3260 AE, Holland) was most likely recorded in the mid-

1940s or early 1950s. Irby's singing-talking style has a friendly tone to it, and he had fine musicians in his band — the piano and steel guitar solos are a delight. Highlights: "Texas Gal Polka", an instrumental, and one of numerous songs referring to Irby's home state; "A Cup Of Coffee And A Cigarette", a humorous rant about his favorite vices, for which he would gladly sacrifice breakfast; "Mama Don't Allow It", a cover of boogie-woogie pianoplayer Cow Cow Davenport's song, with adjustments made to the lyrics to fit the western swing genre, like "Mama don't allow no steel guitars in here"; "Nails In My Coffin", a weeper about drinking to drown out the heartache of a lost love; "First Time I Saw That Gal", an odd yet cute song that works in a list of rhymes about animals, as well as a wedding; the melancholy "I've Got The Blues For Texas", where he misses his home and his sweetie, although I'm not sure which he loves more! A recurring theme in Irby's songs is the failure of his relationships with women. I don't know if it is fact or fiction, but he seems to sum it up with the song "Ball And Chain", where he sings "I'll take the word of others that women won't be true, I'll take advice and always let them be, they'll fool you from the start, then they'll break your heart, that ball and chain just isn't meant for me". Unfortunately, one of his best songs in this vein, "Divorce Me C.O. D." isn't on this CD. This previously unissued recording can be found, though, on the Krazy Kat CD, *Lone Star Stomp: Texas Dance Hall Music, Vol. 2* (various).

Recommended reading: *Unsung Heroes of Rock N' Roll: The Birth of Rock N' Roll in the Dark and Wild Years Before Elvis*, by Nick Tosches (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1984; Da Capo Press, 1999). ☎

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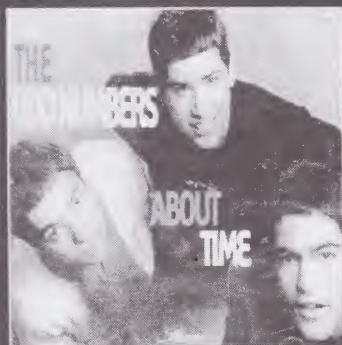
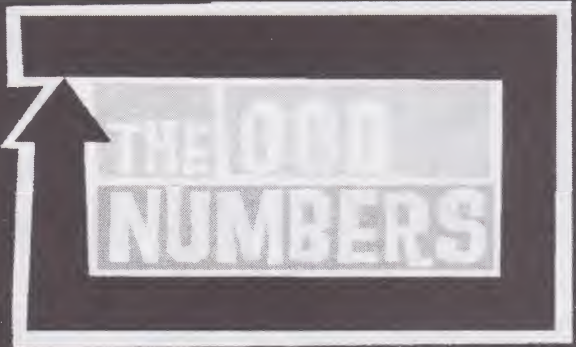


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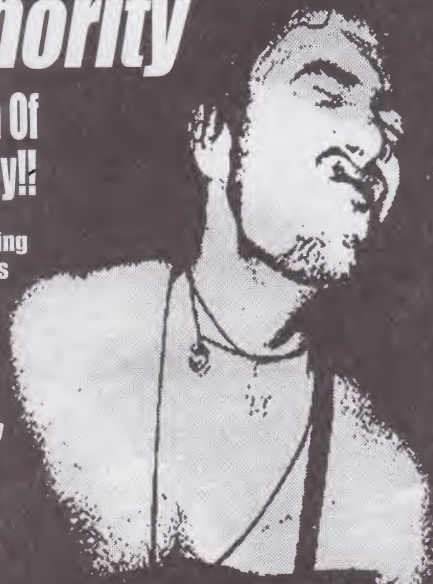
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SUN. JUNE 17 - THE PITS, AMSTERDAM, NL
WEDS. JUNE 20 - AJZ BAHNDAMM, WERMELSKIRCHEN, GERMANY
THURS. JUNE 21 - PREDIGERKELLER, ERFURT, GERMANY
FRI. JUNE 22 - WILD AT HEART, BERLIN, GERMANY
SAT. JUNE 23 - KOTTON, OSNABRUCK, GERMANY
SUN. JUNE 24 - ALTE MEICHEREL, REGENSBURG, GERMANY
MON. JUNE 25 - ZWISCHENFALL, DORTMUND, GERMANY
TUES. JUNE 26 - THRIPTICON, MUNSTER, GERMANY
WEDS. JUNE 27 - DE KLOEMP, BRABANT, BELGIUM
THURS. JUNE 28 - FRONTLINE, GENT, BELGIUM
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SAT. JUNE 30 - THE FREEBUTT PUB, BRIGHTON, UK
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TUES. JULY 3 - THE OLD RAILWAY, BIRMINGHAM, UK
WEDS. JULY 4 - REDHOUSE STUDIOS, MANCHESTER, UK
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MON. JULY 16 - THE BLUE SALOON, N. HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA (NO DUTIES)
TUES. JULY 17 - HEADLINE RECORDS, HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA (NO DUTIES)
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I am your worst nightmare. I am a BAD American. I am George Carlin.

I believe the money I make belongs to me and my family, not some mid-level governmental functionary with a bad comb-over who wants to give it away to crack addicts squirting out babies. I'm not in touch with my feelings and I like it that way, damn it! I believe no one ever died because of something Ozzy Osbourne, Ice-T or Marilyn Manson sang.

I think owning a gun doesn't make you a killer.

I believe it's called the Boy Scouts for a reason.

I don't think being a minority makes you noble or victimized. I believe that if you are selling me a Big Mac, you better do it in English.

I don't use the excuse "it's for the children" as a shield for unpopular options or actions.

I think fireworks should be legal on the 4th of July.

I think that being a student doesn't give you any more enlightenment than working
a t

I know wrestling is fake and I don't waste my time arguing about it.

I think global warming is a big lie. Where are all those experts now, when I am freezing my ass through a long winter?

I've never owned a slave, or was a slave, I didn't wander forty years in the desert after getting chased out of Egypt, I haven't burned any witches or been persecuted by the Turks and neither have you, so shut the #\$%!- up already.

I want to know which church is it exactly where the Reverend Jesse Jackson preaches. And where does he get his money? And why is he always part of the problem and not the solution?

I think the cops have every right to shoot your sorry ass if you're running from them. I also think they have the right to pull your ass over if you are breaking the law regardless of what color you are.

I think if you are too stupid to

to never to delay the rest of us again.

I think beef jerky could quite possibly be the perfect food.

I believe that it doesn't take a village to raise a child, it takes two parents.

I think tattoos and piercings are fine if you want them, but please don't pretend they are a political statement.

I think Dr. Seuss was a genius.

I'm neither angry nor disenfranchised, no matter how desperately the mainstream media would like the world to believe otherwise.

I believe if she has her lips on your willie, it is sex, and it is sex for both of you. This even applies when you are President of the United States.

If that makes me a BAD American, then yes, I'm

Fresh from the public domain, Hit List brings you:

SUBJECT: WE NEED OUR COUNTRY BACK

By
George Carlin

Blockbuster.

In fact, if your parents are footing the bill to put your pansy ass through 4-7 years of college, you haven't begun to be enlightened.

I believe everyone has the right to pray to his or her God.

Hillary Clinton is a carpet-crunching lesbian. My heroes are John Wayne, the Simpsons and whoever cancelled "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman".

I don't hate the rich. I don't pity the poor.

know how a ballot works, I don't want you deciding who should be running the most powerful nation in the world for the next four years.

I hate those bastards standing in the intersections trying to sell me crap or trying to guilt me into making "donations" for their cause. These people should be targets.

I think if you are in the passing lane, and not passing, your license should be revoked, and you should be forced to ride the bus until you promise

a BAD American. If you are a BAD American, please forward this to everyone you know. We need our country back! ☺



* beat * beat * beat * beat * beat * beat

INTERVIEW WITH BRIAN SMITH BY
MIKE FLAME. INTRODUCTION BY
JOSH PUTLEGE

angels angels angels

i'm bored to gruesome death with jaded old grouches who bitch about how there just aren't any great rock and roll bands around anymore. Spare me the silly spew about the

"good old days," will you?! Don't tell me that meaningful music died with Johnny Thunders! Life goes on, and so does rock and roll! Just because you don't want to dig for gold doesn't mean it's not out there!

Take Arizona's Beat Angels, for example. These trashy cats take a back seat to no one. This INCREDIBLE glam/punk/power pop/rock'n'roll force was delivering the goods YEARS before every poser with a guitar decided to crash the nouveau-glitter-rock party. The band's first CD, 1996's "Unhappy Hour", stands as one of the greatest rock and roll albums of the 90s. Produced by Gilby Clarke, this flat-out perfect amalgamation of sweet, blissful bubblegum pop and raunchy, sleazy glam punk (laced with beautifully beatific poetic lyrical fare) blazed the same sonic streets that the Black Halos and American Heartbreak would later travel. Another gem

of an album, "Red Badge of Discourage", followed in 1997.

Singer Brian Smith and his mates (guitarists Michael Brooks and Keith Jackson, along with a revolving door of rhythm players) have kept the Beat Angels' fire burning since 1994. Rock'n'roll stardom has alluded this raunchy bunch, but one cannot deny the overwhelming allure of the band's hooky trash-pop anthems. Said songs are brilliant, infectious sugar blasts emanating from the saddest corner of the dingiest bar on the seediest side of town. These inspired odes to alcohol, despair, self-destruction, and loose women speak to the heartbroken, the hopeless, the all-used-up, the beautiful losers, the dejected dreamers, and the diehard romantics of this rotting globe! Not since The Replacements' prime has a band infused such addictive hooks into such splendidly-crafted rock and roll poetry.

Heart, soul, and smarts may not sell

records these days, but said virtues remain the very core of today's finest underground rock'n'roll. The Beat Angels marry melody and guts to wit and substance, and in so doing they hit the ravenous rock fan in all the right places. If you're looking for the greatest band you've never heard, the Beat Angels are IT! Songs like "The Most Beautiful Loser In Town" and "Grow Up" are divine treasures. If they are destined for eternal obscurity, it will be humanity's loss.

Mike Frame: How did you all originally come together in Phoenix, and what were your goals in the beginning?

Brian Smith: The first time I met Michael, I bumped into him in Hollywood. He was in a band called Motorcycle Boy for a couple of years. I bumped into him outside of a porn shop. I know that sounds all bio-ready, but it's true. Then one day I walked into a record store in Phoenix, and he was working there. This was sometime in '93. We got together and wrote a song that Alice Cooper recorded for his "Last Temptation" record called "Sideshow." That really launched everything cuz we got a ton of money for that,

like thirty grand. We also got a publishing deal because of it. That really legitimized what we were doing all of the sudden. Then we met Keith and put the band together. You know, we were gonna take over the world and all that stuff. When we began playing in Phoenix, our first gig was in '94, and it was all this Gin Blossoms jangly thing going on. We came out with our goofy Keith Richards knock-off thing with eyeliner and everything, it was a reaction against everything that was going on. And it worked. We had an instant following. Then we got a record deal with Epiphany, which was based in Arizona. It was cool cuz he gave us a lot of money to tour. But the guy, years later, he died. That's why we didn't do a third record with that label. We were gonna do another record with him. We were into that label for like 40 grand, which is a lot for an indie. But he believed in us, god bless him. Then we had some major label interest. We showcased for every single major label there is. We played at South by Southwest a few times. One show was a sold out show. It was full of record label people, and they all said our image was "too

hard." I never knew what that meant. Or they'd tell us the songs were "too pop". What does that mean? When we play, things fall over, mic stands topple, things break, beers spill. That's the way it should be; it's a rock show. We were playing this little shithole in Austin, and things are toppling over, beers are breaking, chandeliers are swinging, and it upset these people from the labels. We're always in the right place, wrong time or wrong time, right place. It's such a cliché, even talking about it feels like a cliché. All the bands that you and I love, aside from the bigger ones like the Raspberries, it's the same story.

MF: It seems like from Silverhead to the Joneses to the Dogs D'Amour, that's always the case.

BS: Yeah! Silverhead, fuck, those two records are amazing!! One time we were in LA about a year ago, we were doing a gig

and Michael Des Barres was there. I go up to him and start singing a Silverhead song, "Hello, New York". He was with Patricia Arquette, and I told him, "In my mind you're one of the best Rock'n'roll stars of all-time." He couldn't believe it. He didn't think that anyone even knew who Silverhead was. He leans over to Patricia and goes "See, see--tell her that!" He was on the verge of losing her at that point, I think. So that's my Michael Des Barres story. They (Silverhead) should have been huge! He had that voice too, one that sounded good on the radio, whereas bands like the Dolls or the Dead Boys didn't, the voice wasn't "good" enough for the radio. Same thing with Alice Cooper, he had that voice. Michael Des Barres did, too. That's a mystery that they didn't get huge.

MF: Same thing with the Joneses, it seems like they were just two years ahead of the curve. I mean how much did Guns n' Roses steal from them?

BS: Yeah, you're right, GNR stole everything from them. They would have at least gone on to that LA Guns level of success. They would have had some gold records to pass around. They were at the tail end of the whole "New Romantic" thing. What the hell were they doing playing that stuff then?

MF: I know, here they come out of hardcore, tough guy Orange County, playing these great Dolls-y rave ups.

BS: Yeah, them and the Hangmen. The Hangmen had a second record on Capitol (produced by Rob Younger of Radio Birdman) that never came out. I mean, either you have it or you don't. GNR, those guys were a bunch of posers. It's all timing. Compared to the Joneses, GNR were just a bunch of knockoffs. I mean Axl Rose is certainly an original, in his own way he's pretty brilliant. It's just



depressing. LA is depressing. I lived there for awhile.

MF: That's what I was gonna ask. What kept the Beat Angels from leaving Phoenix and moving to LA?

BS: I had lived there before, and it's hard enough just to get a car and make it to some horrible job on the other side of town, having to be on the freeway for three hours. That's bad enough, but to try to survive and pay for a rehearsal space and make sure everyone in the group has a roof over their heads, it's fuckin' hard. It's really stupid. When that whole thing took off, a lot of the kids that were starting those stupid bands in the wake of Guns n' Roses, they all had rich parents or trust funds. There was always some money

coming from somewhere. Michael and I had to sleep on couches and stuff, and all these kids had new cars. That's the one thing I really liked about GNR, Axl particularly. He came off a bus, out of a trailer. He really connected, man. I don't think he's gonna connect again, though. He's too rich and too weird.

MF: Do you think that the style of music that you play causes your band to fall through the cracks to a certain degree?

BS: Yeah, I mean it can go one way. The Black Crowes tapped into something, and they were good enough at what they did that it worked. Being influenced by a couple of things, particularly the New York Dolls and the Heartbreakers - to say that is so cliché - but that's something I genuinely

grew up on. I bought those records, I was the only kid in Tucson, AZ that had those records. That stuff becomes your heart. And if that's your heart, it's pretty much guaranteed that you're not gonna succeed, and you're destined for failure. It's disheartening and sad and demoralizing. Especially when you're good at it and you get to the point where you write songs and other people really dig 'em. But it's just too left of center, the kids in Middle America won't get it. They did at one time with Alice Cooper, with "Billion Dollar Babies". At the time it got the Max's Kansas City hipsters and the kids in the Midwest, they

both dug it. I don't think that's ever gonna happen again. That's what I was hoping: perhaps the longshot for our band to have that kind of success to get both.

MF: It seems like a lot of folks look down on glam and pop.

BS: Yeah, like it's a dirty word. You know what? Anybody can fucking scream, but I think it takes a real man to come up with a hook that makes the girls go nuts. Something that can give you goosebumps, that's manliness! Bands like Rick Springfield and the Bay City Rollers, they all had great songs and somehow it tarnished the whole pop thing. I think the Beatles set the standard for the pop song, and it was brilliant.

MF: It seems like if you go for hooks, you have to totally cheese it out and go for the Matchbox 20 crap. Either that or just keep toiling in obscurity.

BS: To me the Matchbox 20 stuff fails on both levels. It fails as hard rock, and it fails as pop. It's not good at either, what is it? The songs have absolutely no staying power, they don't stay in your head. But then again, maybe if you turned on the radio and all you heard was pop with big huge choruses, you wonder if you'd get sick of it.

MF: There is kind of a beauty in being a fantastic failure, I guess.

BS: Well there is and there isn't. Being drunk and basically wanting to die because you think what you do is really good but nobody else is really getting it. Believing all that mythology and stuff can be a really horrible way to live. I don't know any other way to live, though. I just try not to wallow in that kind of selfishness. It can be pretentious to think that way, but it can also really kill a man. It can really do a lot to a guy's spirit. With our band, what keeps it going is that somebody gets it somewhere. We've got all these kids in Finland that love us. We get all these letters that are barely legible. That's the kind of shit that tells you somebody gets it, and that's just enough to make you miserable. You know, if we're not gonna succeed, if we're not gonna sustain ourselves doing this, at least tell us we suck. It's always a couple of letters or guys like you calling up which just reaffirms the fact that nothing is working. Even bands like the Backyard

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Babies, they're good and stuff, but somehow they manage to tap into a bigger core of people, and I don't know how they did it. It's probably cuz the songs are less poppy. (Laughs)

MF: When I saw you at the Desert Trash Blast (a yearly weekend of hot rock'n'roll action in Phoenix put on by Jeff Dahl), you were coming off an extended break from playing?

BS: Well, it's really hard in this town to find people that can play drums. We seem to go through drummers...our first drummer died. He got cancer at a very young age, and he died. Since then, we've had a succession of drummers that are completely out of their minds. My experience has been that drummers are like frustrated frontmen or something. I don't know what the deal is, but they're out of their minds. We're on drummer #5 or something. I've lost count. We always have good drummers cuz our music won't work without it. So when we lose a drummer, we can lose like 8 months. It's depressing. Then the depression gets so big that you don't even wanna pick up the acoustic guitar and write a song. Then I start thinkin' about other things in my life, like my job, and all of the sudden it becomes important. That stuff isn't important; the music is!

MF: How did you first get interested in punk and glam music?

BS: I was living in Tucson, AZ. I was in sixth grade, I think, when the Sex Pistols record came out, and that's what did it: the Pistols. Then the Ramones. When you discover things like that, you're hated. I was HATED. I didn't know that that kind of prejudice existed. I might as well have been Latino or a black guy. I grew up in an all-white neighborhood; it was horrible. Getting called a "fag", getting beaten up after school for liking this stuff. But somehow when that's your interest, you meet people along the way who have similar tastes and interests. Somehow you do; it's this weird magnetism. I got in a punk band and started doing covers when I was a teenager. I quit school and everything to be a rock star. But I read a lot of books; I think that's how I wound up being able to write. I quit high school in tenth grade to be in a band. It was the only way I could meet girls. It's such a cliché,

but it worked fabulously. I was 15 years old and wearing eyeliner; what was I thinking? Screwing all these girls; it was fantastic. My first band was the Pills, and it morphed into Gentlemen After Dark in the late 80s. That fell apart. I was married, too. That fell apart, and the Beat Angels came together after that. Gentleman After Dark moved to LA in 1989; that's why I didn't wanna live there again. We weren't at all like a metal band or anything. We were kinda like the Psychedelic Furs; it was funny that we'd be on the bill with all these horrible bands. I wound up booking a club. My friend Jonathan Daniel, who was in the band Candy with Gilby Clarke, was booking a club. Then, when he moved to New York with Electric Angels, I did that job. I knew all the bookers and the club owners, so we got on all these big bills.

MF: Jonathan Daniel, what a great songwriter.

BS: I know, and when he quit playing music, he really quit. He's working for a music publisher now. They remastered the Candy record; they were gonna reissue it after Gilby had been in GNR for a few years. It just never came out. Hearing stories from when they were making the Candy record, Jonathan told me Gilby didn't even play on it. They brought in the guy from the Raspberries to do all the guitar parts. Gilby would play his parts and go, then the other guy would come in and replace all his parts. Because it was too punk rock! There are some demos from that record, and the guitar is really heavy and cool and loud. When they kicked the singer Kyle out, I was gonna be in the band. But I couldn't sing those songs. It was horrible, it sounded like shit.

MF: What are your sources of inspiration as a musician, what drives you to create?

BS: Lately...nothing. But a lot of writers I like, guys like Bob Dylan, guys like Jim Thompson, and a guy named Dennis Johnson, he's great. Dorothy Allison, she wrote a book called *Bastards Out Of Carolina*, which is fantastic, that was a big life inspiration. With music, I like the Pogues; they're one of my favorites. But usually some three-chord pop always did it for me the most. Like the Beat [Paul Collins' Beat], 20/20, you know. The power chords, they don't go away; they're in your blood. Every time I sit and write a song, it



PHOTO BY JEFF DAHL

always sounds like all the records I bought when I was a kid. The Plimsouls, Sham 69...all the usual stuff.

MF: Have you ever thought about whether you'll leave behind a legacy once your band is gone?

BS: That's really grandiose thinking. I can really appreciate you asking a question like that, but it's almost embarrassing to talk about. In my wildest dreams we'd be remembered as a band that mattered. Michael and I joke about this: all our favorite bands only made two records. The Dead Boys, the Dolls, they just had two records in 'em, and then they just evaporated. We've already done two, but we gotta do a third; I don't wanna end up like that.

MF: How important do you think image is in the overall picture of being in a band?

BS: I never really look at it like image. I just figure you dress the way you dress, and you play rock'n'roll. It just so happens



that the way we dress...some people are really threatened by it. To me, I bought records based on album covers when I was a kid. Like the first two Japan records. They looked like the New York Dolls, so I bought 'em. But back then it was less contrived. When somebody looked like that, they were usually some fringe artist or something. It was always good. But during the 80s it was lifted, it was all so fake. You couldn't buy a record on the strength of its cover because what you'd get was such slop. But the first round, man, the look was everything. It all tied together.

MF: I've also been wondering a lot lately what has happened to the idea of a great charismatic frontman. It seems to be a lost art with a few exceptions: yourself, Michael Monroe...

BS: I think history will show that that was just a space in time, started by Elvis or probably Frank Sinatra (the first real front guy). Then Mick Jagger was the one who spawned the David Lee Roths and the Mike Monroes and me or Johnny Rotten, whoever. These sorts of things, the personality/pop star/front guys, it will only

be a glitch in time. I think it's run its course. I don't know that that kind of entertainment can sustain. I don't know if you could call Kid Rock a frontman. He is in a way; he has elements of that. He tries to pass himself off as the return of rock'n'roll, but he's got no rock'n'roll in him. It's morphed into that, and then it'll morph into something else. But it will never be popular again. You'll never see five guys from the streets playing rock'n'roll get popular again. You always say your generation had the best music, but it's never been this bad. There's usually always something around that I can like, as bad as it may seem, but right now there's nothing. Even the Bon Jovi shit sounds OK now. I hated that shit with a passion, but at least it had an element of songwriting. Now you get some guy with marginal rhythm ability and no singing talent, and you can be huge like Fred Durst. I hate that fat pig! He's a complete moron, and kids are looking up to that guy? He represents everything I hate about men. He has that fratboy mentality. He's overweight; frontpeople shouldn't be fat. He's got that macho "Let's mow down as many chicks as we can" mentality. Plus

he's a coward who won't even back up what he says. He's like that one kid in junior high that always wanted to beat you up. Rock'n'roll is supposed to be anti-corporate. He's totally embracing the corporate thing, which makes him the biggest pussy.

MF: There's just nothing to that crap; the entertainment value is not there. I mean anyone can be pissed off...

BS: Right. It's the whole "rebel without a clue" thing. I like anger, but I like my anger with a bit of intelligence behind it. Or a bit of research, a bit of focus. Anger is good, social unrest is good. Limp Bizkit is bad. ☺

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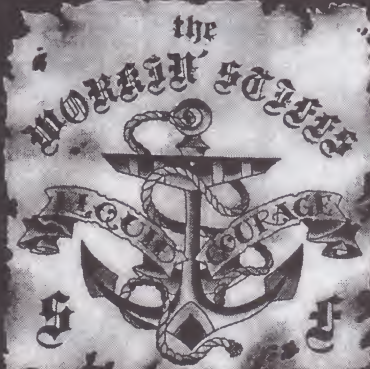
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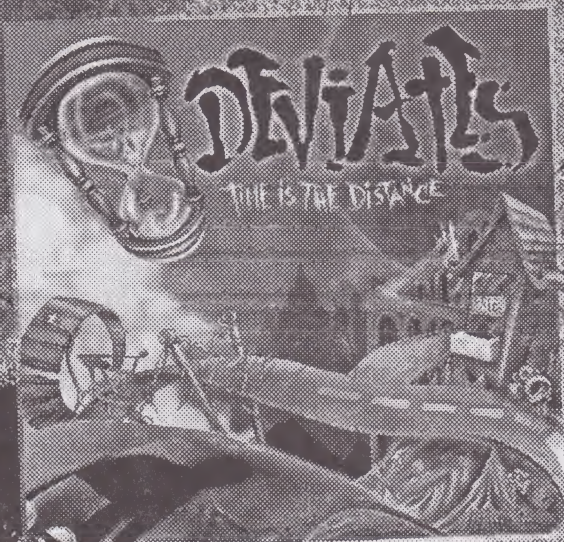
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6 St. Petersburg, FL @ State Theatre
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2 Hollywood @ Troubadour

3 Pomona @ Glass House

4 Ventura/Santa Cruz

5 San Francisco @ The Pound

7 Medford, OR @ Dance EFX (Club 25)

8 Portland, OR @ Paris Theatre

9 Seattle, WA @ The Paradox

10 Spokane, WA @ Big Dipper

11 Boise ID @ House of Rock

12 SLC @ Kilby Court Gallery

13 Denver, CO @ TBA

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15 Des Moines @ Hairy Mary's

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Crowd: Jer-ry! Jer-ry! Jer-ry!

Jerry: Today's guests are here because they can't agree on fundamental philosophical principles. I'd like to welcome Todd to the show.

Jerry: Hello, Todd.

Todd: Hi, Jerry.

Jerry: [reading from card] So, Todd, you're here to tell your girlfriend something. What is it?

Todd: Well, Jerry, my girlfriend Ursula and I have been going out for three years now. We did everything together. We were really inseparable. But then she discovered post-Marxist political and literary theory, and it's been nothing but fighting ever since.

Jerry: Why is that?

Todd: You see, Jerry, I'm a traditional Cartesian rationalist. I believe that the individual self, the "I" or ego is the foundation of all metaphysics. She, on the other hand, believes that the contemporary self is a socially constructed, multi-faceted subjectivity reflecting the political and economic realities of late capitalist consumerist discourse.

Crowd: Oooooohhhh!

Todd: I know! I know! Is that infantile, or what?

Jerry: So what do you want to tell her today?

Todd: I want to tell her that unless she ditches the post-modernism, we're through. I just can't go on having a relationship with a woman who doesn't believe I exist.

Jerry: Well, you're going to get your chance. Here's Ursula!

[Ursula storms onstage and charges up to Todd.]

Ursula: Patriarchal colonizer!

[She slaps him viciously. Todd leaps up, but the security guys pull them apart before things can go any further.]

Ursula: Don't listen to him! Logic is a male hysteria! Rationality equals oppression and the silencing of marginalized voices!

Todd: The classical methodology of rational dialectic is our only road to truth! Don't try to deny it!

THE ALTERNATIVE JERRY SPRINGER

Ursula: You and your dialectic! That's how it's been through our whole relationship, Jerry. Mindless repetition of the post-Enlightenment meta-narrative. "You have to start with radical doubt, Ursula." Or "Post-structuralism is just classical skeptical thought re-cast in the language of semiotics, Ursula."

Crowd: Boo! Boo!

Jerry: Well, Ursula, come on. Don't you agree that the roots of contemporary neo-Leftism simply have to be sought in Enlightenment political philosophy?

Ursula: History is the discourse of powerful centrally located voices marginalizing and describing the sub-altern!

Todd: See what I have to put up with? Do you know what it's like living with someone who sees sex as a metaphoric demonstration of the anti-feminist violence implicit in the discourse of the dominant power structure? It's terrible. She just lies there and thinks of Andrea Dworkin. That's why we never do it any more.

Crowd: Wooooo!

Ursula: You liar! Why don't you tell them how you haven't been able to get it up for the past three months because you couldn't decide if your penis truly had essential Being, or was simply a manifestation of Mind?

Todd: Wait a minute! Wait a minute!

Ursula: It's true!

Jerry: Well, I don't think we're going to solve this one right away. Our next guests are Louis and Tina. And Tina has a little confession to make!

[Louis and Tina come onstage. Todd and Ursula continue bickering in the background.]

Jerry: Tina, you are...[reads cards]...an existentialist, is that right?

Tina: That's right, Jerry. And Louis is, too.

Jerry: And what did you want to tell Louis today?

Tina: Jerry, today I want to tell him...



Jerry: Talk to Louis. Talk to him.

[Crowd hushes.]

Tina: Louis... I've loved you for a long time...

Louis: I love you, too, Tina.

Tina: Louis, you know I agree with you that existence precedes essence, but...well, I just want to tell you I've been reading Nietzsche lately, and I don't think I can agree with your egalitarian politics any more.

Crowd: Wooooo! Wooooo!

Louis: [shocked and disbelieving] Tina, this is crazy. You know that Sartre clarified all this way back in the 40's.

Tina: But he didn't take into account Nietzsche's radical critique of democratic morality, Louis. I'm sorry. I can't ignore the contradiction any longer!

Louis: You got these ideas from Victor, didn't you? Didn't you?

Tina: Don't you bring up Victor! I only turned to him when I saw you were seeing that dominatrix! I needed a real man! An Über-man!

Louis: [sobbing] I couldn't help it. It was my burden of freedom. It was too much!

Jerry: We've got someone here who might have something to add. Bring out...Victor!

[Victor enters. He walks up to Louis and sticks a finger in his face.]

Victor: Louis, you're a classic post-Christian intellectual. Weak to the core!

Louis: [through tears] You can kiss my Marxist ass, Reactionary Boy!

Victor: Herd animal!

Louis: Lackey!

[Louis throws a chair at Victor; they lock horns and wrestle. The crowd goes wild. After a long struggle, the security guys pry them apart.]

Jerry: Okay, okay. It's time for questions from the audience. Go ahead, sir.

Audience member: Okay, this is for Tina. Tina, I just wanna know how you can call yourself an existentialist, and still agree with Nietzsche's doctrine of the Übermensch. Doesn't that imply a belief in intrinsic essences that is in direct contradiction with the fundamental principles of existentialism?

Tina: No! No! It doesn't. We can be equal in potential, without being equal in eventual personal quality. It's a question of Becoming, not Being.

Audience member: That's just disguised essentialism! You're no existentialist!

Tina: I am so!

Audience member: You're no existentialist!

Tina: I am so an existentialist, bitch!

[Ursula stands and interjects.]

Ursula: What does it [bleep] matter? Existentialism is just a cover for late capitalist anti-feminism! Look at how Sartre treated Simone de Beauvoir!

[Women in the crowd cheer and stomp.]

Tina: [Bleep] you! Fat-ass Foucaultian ho!

Ursula: You only wish you were smart enough to understand Foucault, bitch!

Tina: You the bitch!

Ursula: No, you the bitch!

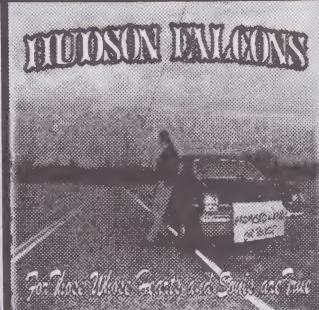
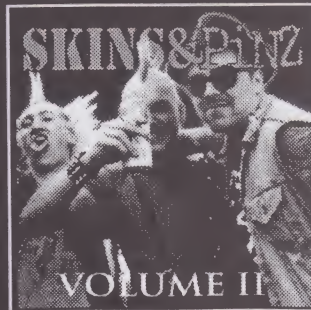
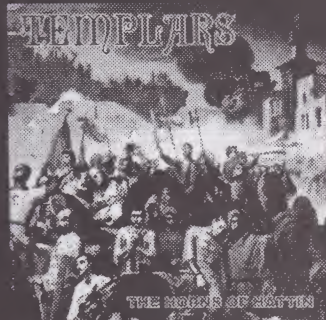
Tina: Whatever! Whatever!

Jerry: We'll be right back with a final thought! Stay with us!

[Commercial break for debt-consolidation loans, ITT Technical Institute, and Psychic Alliance Hotline.]

Jerry: Hi! Welcome back. I just want to thank all our guests for being here, and say that I hope you're able to work through your differences and find happiness, if indeed happiness can be extracted from the dismal miasma of warring primal hormonal impulses we call human relationship. [turns to the camera] Well, we all think philosophy is just fun and games. Semiotics, deconstruction, Lacanian post-Freudian psychoanalysis, it all seems like good, clean fun. But when the heart gets involved, all our painfully acquired metaphysical insights go right out the window, and we're reduced to battling it out like rutting wildebeast. It's not pretty. If you're in a relationship, and differences over the fundamental principles of your respective subjectivities are making things difficult, maybe it's time to move on. Find someone new, someone who will accept you and the way your laughably limited human intelligence chooses to codify and rationalize the chaos of existence. After all, in the absence of a clear, unquestionable revelation from God, that's all we're all doing anyway. So remember: take care of yourselves — and each other.

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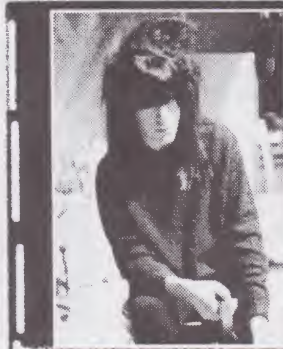
This time around I planned to write about a hip thing I really liked in this day and age of worthless crap, namely, the High School Reject label/releases out of Holland; the only problem is that I'm still waiting for the two newest releases, which are due at any moment, before I go into detail about them. The full details will be provided next time. Also of note: there is a great band in Rochester called **THE LAST OF THE TEEN ICONS** (in honor of **THE MEAN RED SPIDERS**) — a group of 17 year old punk-rebels with high IQ's and bad attitudes, a killer combination for sure. More details will appear on them in future columns, so keep an eye out.

Other than this, the usual stuff is still getting on my nerves, the mass-media in particular. They're always trying to promote and hype the latest shower of shit as if it were the Second Coming, and they always go all out to compare today's losers to icons of the past. For instance, I'm really tired of seeing so much stuff written about that fat-assed moron Jennifer Lopez. She can't act or sing for shit, but the media portrays her as star material simply because she flops her tits around and is always showing off her big fat can. I have to say I did read one thing about her that made me laugh — a drunken George Clooney said that "kissing her was gross"! Most likely, this is the only true thing that has ever been written about her, even if it did appear in *The Star*, which I don't count as a typical media publication. The editors of that paper are always more on the ball, and are about 1000 steps ahead of all the "respectable" publications.

Two other items I read in some mass-media funneled toilet paper described horse-faced Julia Roberts as the new Katherine Hepburn, and super-geek Brad Pitt as the new Steve McQueen. Obviously, the dumbos who wrote that crap are totally clueless. For some reason — payola? — they feel the need to keep praising these idiots, telling the millions of jerks that such people are "cool." I heard rumors that plum-Pitt was supposed to play the part of Rolling Stones icon Brian Jones in a flick about his life in the Stones. They'd probably end up getting the New Dorks On The Block or those other fairies, the Take-It-Up-The-Ass Boys, to play the rest of the Stones. Of course, this decision would then be praised by millions of ignorant assholes, who'd probably be thinking "Wow, I never liked the Rolling Stones until I saw this film." Some of you may recall that this was the public's response to the Doors movie that came out a few years back. This kind of stuff definitely irritates me.

Then again, look at what most fucks watch on TV these days — senseless crap like those "(pseudo-)Reality TV" shows. One example is that super-macho travesty called "Boot Camp", where a bunch of fucking D.I. geeks get to "play Army" at the expense of some retarded civilians. I'd like to see what these losers would do if they were in a real war being hosed down with napalm, or better yet getting bayonets through their thick skulls. I bet they'd shit their pants before dying. It might even be worth watching if this sort of "reality" was involved — at least we could all see some pathetic jerks being disposed of. Apparently, these "Survivor"-inspired shows are the the "happening thing" in this era, man. Yeah, right. Big Fucking Deal. I can't believe the public is actually mesmerized by this rubbish. The irony is that some sissy who

ate a bunch of Japanese beetles and termites on TV has now become some kind of societal hero who gets book offers, film roles, TV spots, and money coming out of his ass. Fucking pathetic. All this just goes to show you that the more idiotic, stupid, and brainless something is, the more popular it is with the mass-media and John Q. Public. A while ago I saw a preview of another "reality" escapade called "Temptation Island", where they ship a heap of 2 dollar hookers to a tropical island to try and steal some dumb jocks away from their mousy-looking girlfriends. After they succeed, as they almost always do, these same dopey air-heads say things like "I can't believe he did this to me".



GREG

P R E V O S T

← **YEAH, I HATE**

These guys probably have the IQ of a piece of lint, so I can't even begin to imagine why their "ex-girlfriends" are so surprised. Besides, who really gives a flying fuck about these dorks or their bimbos? Oh yeah, I forgot — about 20 billion brainwashed retards, who keep the ratings up and ensure that even more drivel comes our way. How can it get any worse than this? Well, check out the newest "reality" show, "Chains of Love".

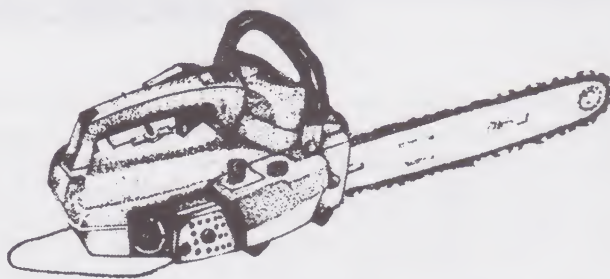
Finally, I recently saw an item on the news about some young suburban geeks and how important their bedrooms are to their "individuality." It seems that all these Little

Lord Fauntleroy's are getting their bedrooms upgraded to match their "new" levels of thinking — as determined by Big Business, of course. Donald Duck pictures are seemingly a thing of the past. Instead, kids now have pictures and posters of Tupac, their psy-

chotic rap hero. Will someone please tell me how a rich, spoiled suburban honky-geek with a \$50,000 car can relate to a black dude who supposedly grew up in the ghetto? I just don't get it. I also get a real kick out of it when dopey little white boys try to mimic black lingo — it's almost like some surreal comic-reality show. Speaking of which, I have a GREAT idea for a new "Survivor"-type show. Maybe I too can make a million dollars, just like all those other fuckheads. Here's the scenario: take a bunch of little rich white wannabes and send them to Harlem for an hour on a weekend night (preferably in their "gangster" garb and the \$50,000 cars that their dads bought for them). Then wait and see if any of them can "survive" for an entire hour. Now that's something I actually WOULD watch. I can see the dollar signs now...

Rock on. ⊕

**Apparently, these
"Survivor"-inspired
shows are the the "happen-
ing thing" in this era, man.**



SCARED OF CHAKA

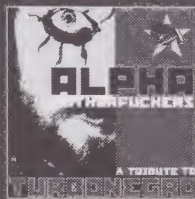
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BLOWS AGAINST THE EMPIRE OR, WE CAN LICK BUSH

To satisfy a curiosity that, for once, I might be wrong and just under one-half of those Americans who bothered to vote on November 7, 2000 might be right, I went to see George W. Bush, President-Select of the United Corporate State, speak at a small college near my home in Connecticut. For the record, this would be Central Connecticut State University in New Britain, on April 17, 2001. My ultimate conclusion?: I was, of course, right all along, but the situation is even worse than I had feared. To put it kindly, Bush is an idiot, and he has no business being president of anything, much less the most powerful nation on earth. But this is America and, like other countries, we get the government that we deserve, right?

Here was the scene: Security was tight at good old CCSU. The Secret Service and Marine Corps had monitored the venue for the week previous to Bush's appearance. In fact, during the absurd pre-event maneuverings, four members of the university baseball team were injured when a Marine Corps helicopter practiced a landing next to the bleachers where they were sitting. Because the president, an extremist conservative with no mandate who was the beneficiary of a tainted and still contested election, is (rightfully) paranoid about his legitimacy, these sorts of pains are necessary to limit the possibility that he will have to answer for his crimes. Because rumors of protesters had been circulated beforehand, classes at CCSU were cancelled on the day of the event, and no students were given tickets to attend. The implication of these actions were obvious; the students, like the homeless before an Olympiad, were to simply disappear — run along now, get your scrotum pierced or your earlobes tattooed, go chat in a chat room if you want, but just git! Presto: a college campus with no college students.

Worse even than not being able to meet and mingle with today's youth, I did not have a press pass and seating was limited at this shindig. Rather, seating was non-existent for this bush-licking, because all the tickets had been distributed through the state Republican Party, assuring that only people smitten with the simian Commander-in-Thief would be inside the venue, the venerable Herbert D. Welte Hall. The protesters outside Welte Hall were another matter. The Bush putsch couldn't do anything about them. Not yet, at any rate. But you can bet the ranch that Ashcroft, Cheney, Card, Baker, Rumsfeld, Barr, Olson, Scalia, Thomas, et al., are working on that constitutional snag even as we speak. For most of the waddling dipshits who voted to put this crooked moron in the White House, freedom of assembly is not a big loss. They seldom assemble anywhere except at the mall, the Wal-Mart, or the sofa. For some of the rest of us, however, this presents a problem. I mean, like, what if we want to, say, listen to a punk band in a public park?

These thoughts churned through my head as I drove to New Britain. Arriving two hours early, I parked in a satellite lot and

walked toward the nearest confluence of media whores. It didn't take long to find them. CBS, CNBC, CNN, CDC, CCRider, *USA Toady*, AP, UPIP, UB-40, hike! The corporate media stenographers...er...reporters had their pens and pads ready to take down, verbatim, what Bush had to say...er...read off his cue cards. It was a beautiful spring day, a bit windy, which was a drag because my BUSH GO HOME sign kept blowing over. As I neared the door to the press entrance, the police dogs began snarling at me and growling under their breath. I decided to retreat, prop my sign in a conspicuous place and try again. Oddly, the second

ALAN BISBORT

try was a success, and an invalid employee's badge and a (barely) valid driver's license was all it took to get me inside the arena. I was patted down by burly security men with mirrored sunglasses and shunted through a metal detector, but no electric cattle prods were applied to my private parts. I even got my pick of seats in press row. Arguably the most anti-Bush human within 50 miles of New Britain, I was being treated with kid gloves and given a third-row seat. This must be what they mean by compassionate conservatism.

Not wanting to push my luck, I sat down, pulled out some reading matter, and waited. I just happened to have brought along *The Bit Between My Teeth* by Edmund

Wilson. In it, I find an interview with the last great man of American letters, circa 1962: "I try to look on the cheerful side," he is saying, "And to tell myself that there's no real way of getting rid of the horrible American cities except to have them vaporized, so I am not in favor of those weapons that exterminate the human beings without destroying the buildings. And it is something of a consolation to remember that if New

York, for example, were bombed, Nelson Rockefeller and Henry Luce and Cardinal Spellman and Robert Moses might be quickly eliminated; and then if Washington got it, the Pentagon, CIA, and all the rest of the government bureaucracy would go. But I hope that as between and Russia the destruction would be reciprocal. Moscow is a dreadful place, too, and swarming with bureaucrats."

Cut to the chase. Bush's speech about his edjucation plan was underwhelming. And the disconnect from reality could not be more stark. A speech about education, with no students present, just a bunch of triple-chinned, voucher-crazy, corporate-

THE STUDENTS, LIKE THE HOMELESS BEFORE AN OLYMPIAD, WERE TO SIMPLY DISAPPEAR...PRESTO: A COLLEGE CAMPUS WITH NO COLLEGE STUDENTS.

HIT SQUAD

welfare-recipients, a "don't-tax-me" army of white fat-asses who never got laid or had any fun at all when they were in college; in short, Bush's core following. Add to this the fact that Bush has all the charisma of a speaker at a Rotary Club luncheon, or perhaps one of those "New Country" balladeers with the perfect Stetson and facial hair arrangement (Travis Twitt?), and I was hard-pressed to even listen. I mean, I'm sitting there in the third row and I honestly find myself reaching for my book. But then I keep thinking, "This is the President of the United States! What will I tell my son when he grows up? That I went to see the President and read a book while he was speaking!?" A monumental struggle ensued in the deep recesses of my being, but I managed to force myself to listen to Bush's speech. It was pure boilerplate nothingness at its most mind-numbing. A sample I jotted in my pad: "We're a land full of decent, loving and compassion (sic) and hard-working people." And, of course, the toadies were clapping themselves silly.

Outside, the messages were more intelligent but less friendly: "NO MORE BUSHIT", "Bush=Milosevic," "The Toxic Texan," "Impeach the GOP," and, of course, my little sign, sitting beside a tree up on a grassy knoll: "BUSH GO HOME." It was here, outside of Welte Hall, that I had an epiphany. Standing among the protesters, a dignified and articulate lot who had come here from other New England campuses (weirdly, no CCSU students defied the class ban and showed up to protest), I looked across at the Young Republicans who were standing among the gun-toting, German shepherd-accompanied police officers. They were everything I never wanted to be when I was in college. One of them, a huge hulking buzzcut mutant with the downturned mouth of a psycho killer, angrily yanked the "BUSH=MILOSEVIC" sign off the wall of the neighboring building. When some of the protesters asked for the wadded banner back, the behemoth threw it in their faces. After a few minutes of jerry-rigging, the protesters got the banner back up on the wall, torn, tattered, bent, folded, and mutilated, but still legible.

I felt like Francis Scott Key in my prison cell looking up in the night sky and seeing the Star-Spangled Banner. And I realized, then, that though the Bush people have usurped power in the nation right now, this action will come back to haunt them, their party, and their goat-faced hordes. I also realized that the vast majority of people in the nation, if not the world, are Not-Bush. They may not realize it now, but they will eventually. If you ever doubted which team you were on, the scene outside Herbert D. Welte Hall in New Britain, Connecticut, on April 27, 2001, would have clarified the matter faster than you can say, "They've got the guns but we've got the numbers." True, the outrage that should be seething right now over the presidential election has been dampened by a collusive silence

emerging from all but the most marginalized print sources — the ones preaching to the choir — and virtually no radio or television sources are speaking the truth. The mainstream media is in total corporate lockdown, a permanent spin cycle that lurches from quarter to quarter, taking its cue from the unseemly wallowings on Wall Street and nourishing itself on small celebrity beer and product tie-ins.

There will be a reckoning. The Not-Bush people are just waking from their slumber, they are rolling over and noticing, perhaps for the first time, the people with whom they've climbed into bed: Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Card, Scalia, Thomas, DeLay, Lott, Hatch, Helms, Thurmond. They are running out of the house. They are terrified. They are looking for kindred spirits. They need your help. Let them know you are Not-Bush. Let them know they are Not-Bush. NO MORE BUSHIT!

THE NOT-BUSH NATIONAL ANTHEM:

*My country 'tis a (choose one) sea / tree / trough
Of (choose one) crass / gross / hot (choose one) celebrity / vulgarity / absurdity
Of this I'm sure.
Land where my (choose one) father / mother / lawyer (choose one) died / cried / lied,
Land of the (choose one) Pilgrims / children / burgers (choose one) pried / fried / bribed,
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Let money (choose one) drip / seep / pour / gush / ooze / creep. ☺*

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walls between us



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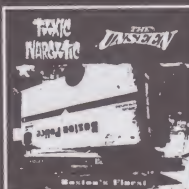
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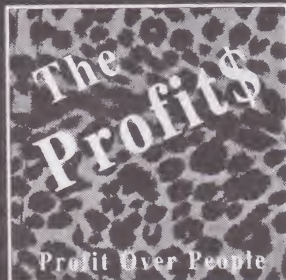
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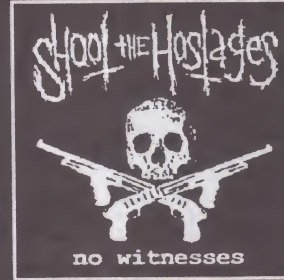
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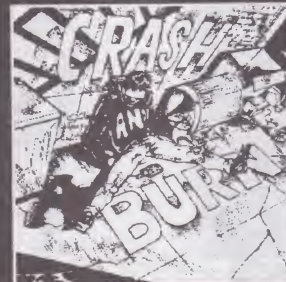
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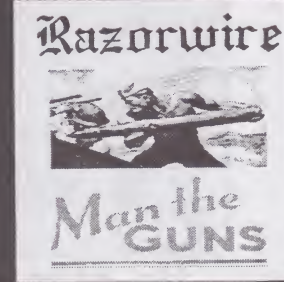
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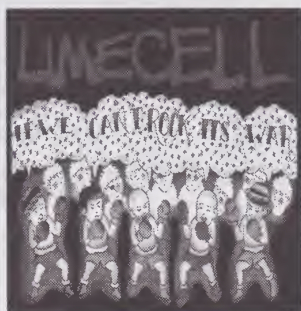
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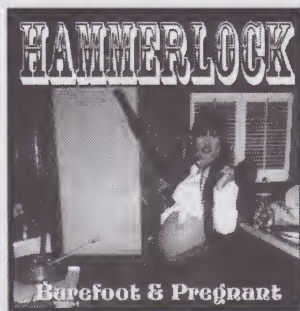
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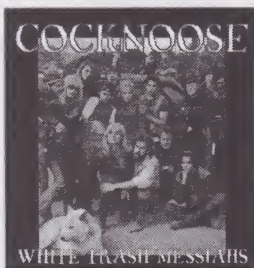
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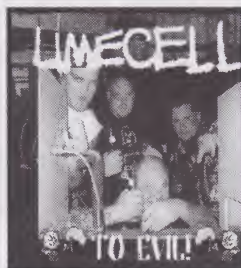
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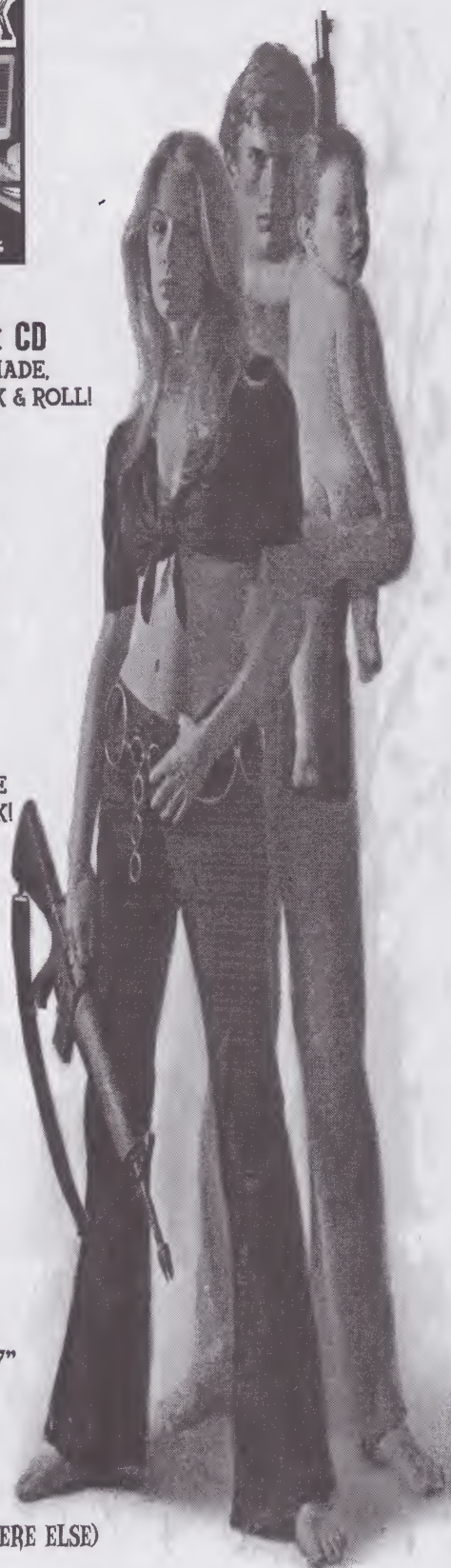
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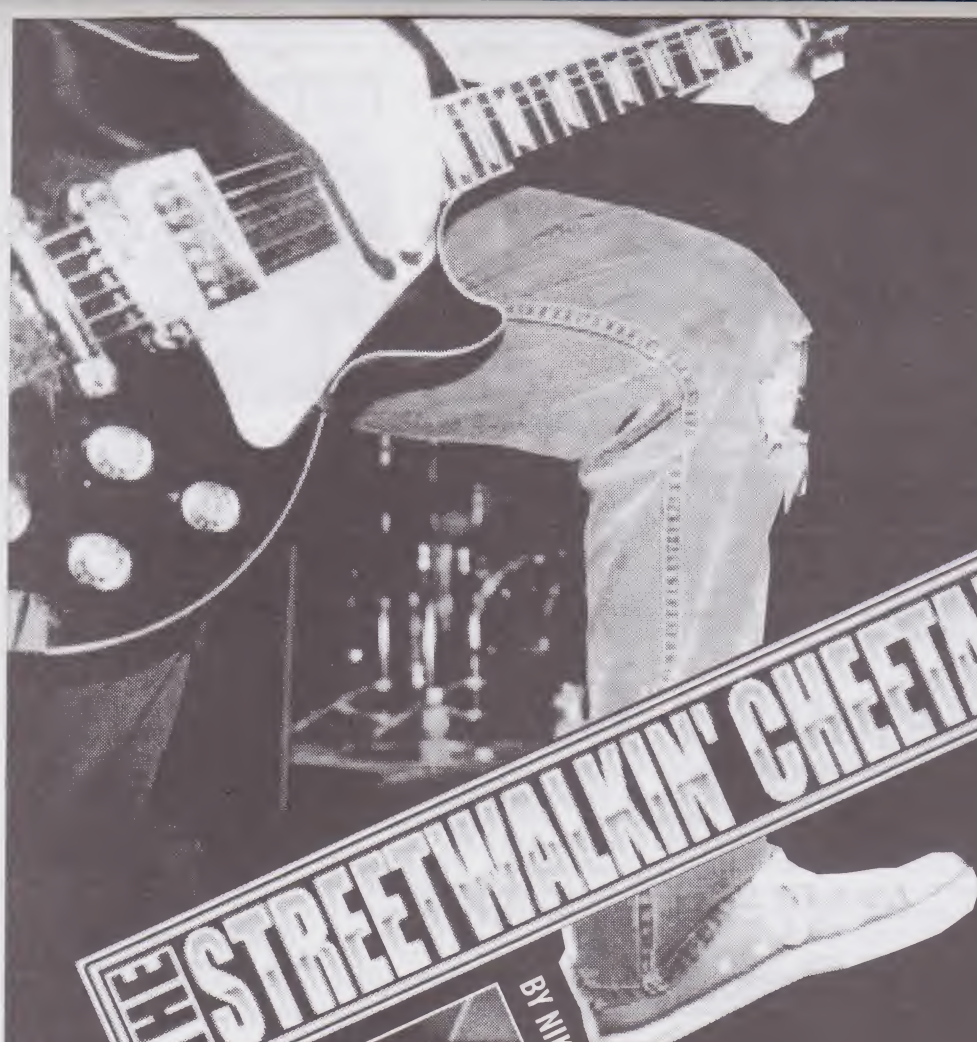


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from the rafters, beer bottles being smashed, tables being overturned, blood being shed, and bones being broken, but it's all in the name of rock 'n' roll.

The Streetwalkin' Cheetahs are the epitome of punk 'n' roll. They take their craft seriously but manage to have fun in the process. "No" is never an option, and subtlety has never been a part of the Cheetahs' vocabulary. The band's latest release, *Waiting for the Death of My Generation*, proves this point. The album captures the spontaneity of the Cheetahs' live show and mixes the band's gritty, grimy, Detroit-style hard rock with vice grip hooks, atom smashing beats, and punk's who-gives-a-fuck attitude. *Waiting for the Death of My Generation* resonates with ear-grabbing melodies and bone-breaking riffs. It's an album that will make the world safe again for ass-kicking rock 'n' roll.

NN: *Waiting for the Death of My Generation* is a deep title. What inspired it?

Frank: It is a line from a song off the record called "No More," and it summarizes our viewpoint. We recorded the album over the course of a week or so with producer Brian Kehew right before we left on the Supersuckers tour last year. Brian has worked with the Muffs, Mother Superior, Air, the Dickies, and he recently did some work with Alice Cooper. He's a nice guy.

Art: Anybody who works on an Alice Cooper record can work on our record.
Frank: When it came time to mix our album, Brian had just finished re-mastering Alice Cooper's *Billion Dollar Babies*.
Art: So our record sounds just like Alice Cooper. Ha!

Frank: *Waiting for the Death of My Generation* has a number of songs that we have been playing live for awhile, so people that have seen us live will recognize songs like "Future Lost," "No More," "Lookout," and "Automatic." We also wrote a number of new songs for this album as well.

Art: We also have horns and sitar on the

BY NIKKI NEIL



"LAST NIGHT MY BLOOD DRIED UP INSIDE ME. †THOUGHT I WAS DEAD, BUT MAN I'M NOT THAT LUCKY. †TIME TO TIME I FEEL A BLANK SENSATION — WAITING FOR THE DEATH OF MY GENERATION." THE STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS.

Proudly picking up where MC5 and the Stooges left off, the Streetwalkin' Cheetahs -- Frank Meyer (vocals/guitar), Art Jackson (guitar), Jeff Watson (bass), and Eric Herrmann (drums) -- are, without a doubt, the hardest working band in rock 'n' roll. †Since their inception in 1995 the punk 'n' roll revivalists have released four studio albums, three seven inches, contributed to several compilation albums, collaborated with a number of their peers, and have annihilated numerous clubs.

The Streetwalkin' Cheetahs are notorious

for their unpredictable live shows. The band's volcanic performances are fueled by their take-no-prisoners attitude. Anyone who has witnessed at least one of these manic events (and lived to talk about it) will attest that a Streetwalkin' Cheetahs' performance is not just a show, it's pure, balls-out mayhem. On any given night you'll find audience members on stage sharing vocal or instrumental duties, band members pouncing on fans or swinging

album.

Frank: We got John Wahl from Claw Hammer, Dirty Walt from Fishbone, and a couple of our friends to come down and do the horn section. Tony, the ex-guitarist for the Bellrays, wrote a song for us called "Mama Train," and we also did a cover of the Saints' "Know Your Product." I mean, shit, the rough mixes of this album sounded ten times better than any of our old records, so we knew we were on the right track. But *Live at KXLU* has sort of its own...

Art: Charm.

Frank: It is what it is. The production is what it is. It sounds like a raw rock 'n' roll record. †It is kind of hard to replicate that moment, but as far as our studio stuff goes I think [this record] is head and shoulders above our studio stuff.

NN: Did the recording process go smoothly?

Jeff: It was great. We recorded live in the studio. Everything took about one or two takes as opposed to spending hours and hours on one track. †We were in and out. It was great.

Frank: I remember at the end of the session Jeff said, "I can't believe we made a record this quickly. Are we done? Wow!"

NN: It really sounds like you guys had your act together.

Frank: We're working with an independent label, and they are very trusting of what we do. †We don't really have any channels to go through so we can make the record we want to make and not have to worry about getting approval from the label. We are much more concerned about the heart and the soul coming through, and the live energy. Not necessarily making the absolute perfect record in terms of everything being absolutely perfect - no mistakes. We're fine with leaving mistakes in if they sound good.

NN: No one will know it's a mistake unless you get an overly fanatic fan that expects you to replicate it live.

Jeff: It's easy to replicate [a mistake] live. (laughs)

Art: You call it a mistake. I call it jazz.

Jeff: I call it opportunity.

NN: I noticed that there is a fifth band

member on stage tonight?

Frank: That's Brian Kehew. He is playing with us tonight in honor of our record release party. "Automatic" has a real prominent keyboard part and there are horns all over "Know Your Product," so we wanted to have at least one gig where we could play those songs like they are on the record. After tonight, every other gig will pale in comparison.

Art: He says sarcastically.

NN: Is there any one song on the album that has a special story behind it?

Jeff: They all have special stories.

Art: It's all fluff.

Frank: They all have special stories but nothing with worldly significance. We're not singing about poverty, famine, or world politics.

Art: We're living that; we don't need to sing about it.

NN: In the past you have covered songs by MC 5, the Stooges, and the Runaways. Why did you choose to cover "Know Your Product" by the Saints on *Waiting for the Death of My Generation*?

Art: Because it's a great song. We talked about covering that song about two years ago. Everybody in the band liked it. We dug the hook and the horns and everything, so when it came time to do a record where we wanted to do a little bit more and incorporate some horns, it was like "Whoop, there it is." That's the song. It was natural. It was easy.

Frank: It was just one of those songs that we've always wanted to do, and we finally did it.

NN: Art, I hear you designed the cover for the new album?

Art: Yes I did.

Eric: "I Art Jackson, designed the cover for the record." He's available for birthday invitations, engraving...

NN: How did the concept for the album cover come about?

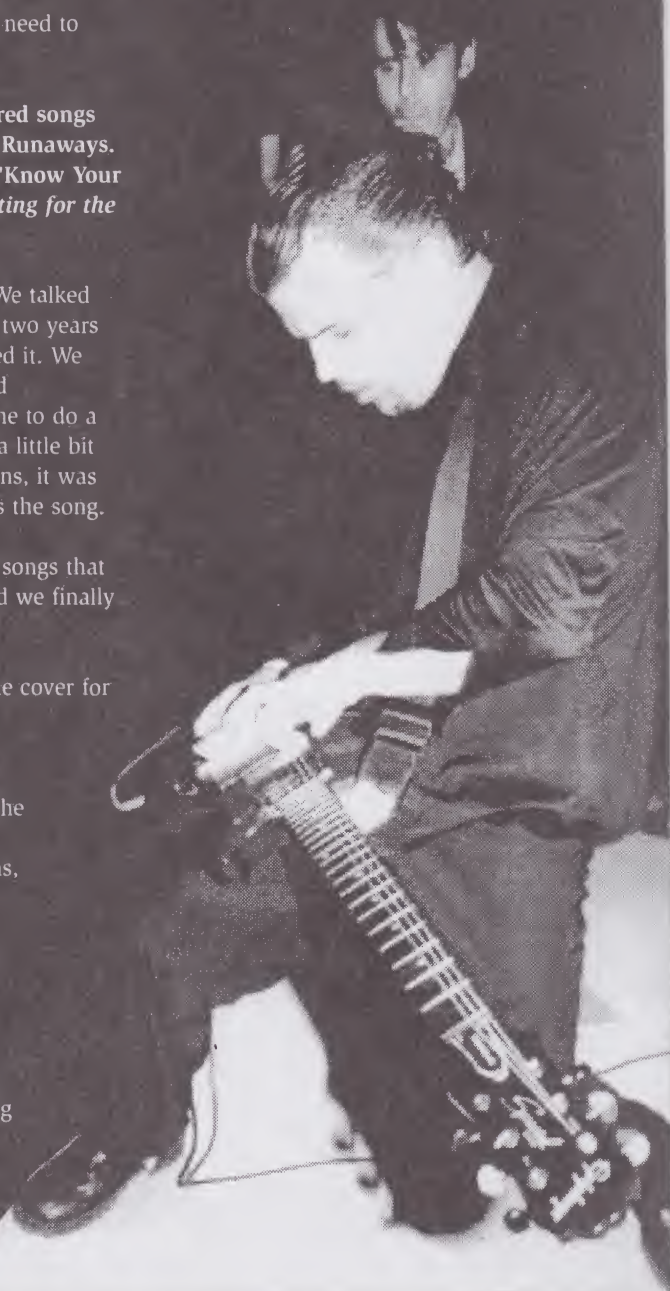
Art: Basically we had a couple of pictures that we were looking at that we wanted to

use that revolved around children and guns, which kind of tied in with the theme "waiting for the death of my generation." The *L.A. Times* wouldn't give us permission to use one of the photos that we wanted, so we had to scramble about and I find this one photo and doctor it up, and it turned out far better than the other one would have.

Jeff: As you can see we have plastered it on stickers, T-shirts - everywhere. It looks cool.

Frank: That is pretty much what the Cheetahs are about - Children armed. (Note: This is a joke. The Streetwalkin' Cheetahs do not endorse children playing with guns.)

NN: Art, being that you come up with the concept for this album, what is your favorite album cover by another artist?



Art: *G.I.* by the Germs. I love that cover. Close second is the Bad Brains record (*Black Dots*) that came out two years ago, which is a black dot instead of a circle. I like that one too. I'm way into circles.

NN: Would you say that *Waiting for the Death of My Generation* is a reflection of your personal tastes?

Eric: It definitely reflects my personal taste, and I didn't even play on it.

Frank: If anything, it reflects our personal tastes now. Every record kind of represents where we were at, at that moment. So the first couple of records were more overtly fast and punk rock because that is pretty much what we did at that time. This record is a little bit more rock 'n' roll sounding, mainly because we made a couple of fast punk rock records and we wanted to keep some of that in the mix, but also wanted to branch out a little bit and keep it more dynamic. We were

listening to a lot of old Aerosmith, Black Sabbath, the Rolling Stones, and Alice Cooper on tour, and we just kind of wanted to make a record that showed a little bit more of that side of us. So that is kind of where we are at now. The next record will sound a bit different because it will reflect the records that we will be listening to over the next year or two.

Jeff: Our E.L.P. collection. (general laughter)

Art: Basically, we haven't found the formula that sticks. We're experimenting.

Frank: Basically, if this record sells a lot, then this is what the next one will sound

like! (laughs)

Jeff: Until then we'll just keep experimenting.

NN: What happened with Mike? Why did he leave the Cheetahs?

Art: He left.

NN: He went over to the Bellrays, right?

Frank: Yeah.

NN: Eric, weren't you in the

"WE JUST GET UP THERE AND DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO ROCK THE CROWD. I THINK SOME OF OUR STAGE SHOW DEVELOPED BECAUSE IN LOS ANGELES IT TAKES QUITE A BIT TO ROCK THE CROWD."

Bellrays?

Eric: I was in the

Bellrays for a very brief period.

Frank: We were joking about how we should have just had a sort of summit meeting and traded drummers - like swaps. "We'll give you four cattle and this pot of gold for your drummer." But, unfortunately it wasn't that simple.

Eric: It actually worked out really nice for me. I'd been in L.A. for the past couple of years playing in a lot of different bands and doing session work and kind of looking for the right group to play with. The thing with the Bellrays came up and, basically, I was just filling in for a month-long tour that they did. When that was over, I was done

with them and they were done with me. I wasn't really sure what my next step was going to be, and I very happily got a call from Frank telling me that their drummer had left and they needed a drummer. We had done some shows together with other bands that I played with, so I came down to audition.

Art: And it was ma-gic. Actually, we were drunk and said "You're in," and then we couldn't take our word back.

Jeff: Blowjobs.

NN: Uh, that would be black mail.

Art: Yeah, pretty much.

NN: So Eric, you were already aware of what the Streetwalkin' Cheetahs are all about.

Eric: Oh yeah. I was actually a big fan of the group before I ended up playing with them.

Art: BIG FAN!

Eric: It was great. I jumped at the opportunity and then, when I'd finally heard the new material that they had been doing, I was ecstatic. Once we got to know each other I was overjoyed. On a personal

level I felt like it really clicked. We

get a long very well.

Frank: Eric is actually one of the few people who will describe knowing the Cheetahs in the same breath as overjoyed. (general laughter)

Art: Most people don't say that.

Frank: It's quite the opposite.

Art: Just ask Mike.

Frank: Yeah, ask Mike of the Bellrays.

NN: Jeff, you replaced Dino when he left about a year ago. How did you get recruited into the Cheetahs camp?

Jeff: I've been friends with Art and Frank for years. I had basically sworn off being in bands for a while. I was tired of being broke and then, oddly enough, I made the strange decision to get back into poverty. Frank gave me a call after they parted ways with Dino. So I got a phone call from Frank and he said, "Do you want to join the band?" Actually, I had done a couple of shows with them initially, so I said, "Yeah, sure. It will be fun." Not really thinking that I want to join the band per se. We did a couple of shows, and they just kept booking shows without really coming to me and saying "you're in."

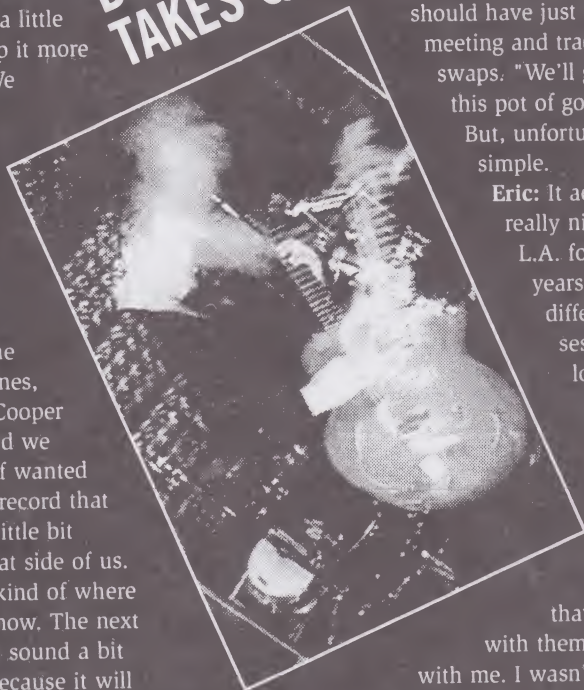
Frank: I'm still not sure if he is in or not.

Jeff: So that is basically it. It was just a phone call. I'd known them anyway, and I was a big fan of the band.

Art: BIG FAN!

Jeff: BIG FAN!

Frank: We kind of just knew that Jeff was the guy, and it was just kind of a matter of talking him into it because, at the time, he wasn't necessarily interested in joining a



band on a full-time basis. We kind of knew that but we figured that after a couple of shows, hopefully, he'd be into it. So when we were wrapping things up with Dino, we had called Jeff and said, "We have a gig booked for this coming week, so can you just learn a few songs?" After a couple of gigs, under those circumstances, we were like, "Oh, here's some more songs to learn." We just sort of all decided to keep doing it together. Pretty much if Jeff would have said "no," we probably wouldn't have lasted too much longer. It was like, "Jeff's the guy, and if he is not the guy then there probably isn't a guy."

NN: A Streetwalkin' Cheetahs' live show is always exciting. What do you try to bring to your audience when you perform on stage?

Art: Hookers and booze.

Jeff: That's what we want them to bring us.

Eric: Whatever it takes.

Frank: Our whole philosophy about playing live is, "Don't bother getting up on stage unless you are going to give it your all." So we just give our all every time. Nothing is really calculated. We just get out there and go full blast and see what happens. Sometimes the shows get a little crazy, and sometimes they get a lot crazy. There's no real formula. We just get up there and do whatever it takes to rock the crowd. I think some of our stage show developed because in Los Angeles it takes quite a bit to rock the crowd. Everyone's pretty jaded, and they've seen a lot of shows. You really have to go full blast to get their attention, and you can sometimes go full blast and still not get their attention. Our whole stage show just kind of developed by playing shows where no one cared that we were on stage playing, so we tried to make them care. A lot of people dig it and a lot of people just despise us.

NN: What has been your wildest live show?

Art: With the band?

Eric: Your strip-tease act doesn't count. (general laughter)

Frank: That is hard to say, because it depends on what your definition of "wild" is.

NN: Okay, what was your most memorable show?

Jeff: I would actually go with the candle.

NN: Yeah, what was all that about the candle wax? I missed that story. Did you swallow candle wax?

Frank: Sort of. It wasn't like I planned it. I just ran off stage while playing a solo and got on the bar, and I grabbed a candle. I was just going to sort of splatter it around and pour it on me but, at the same time, without realizing it, I had my mouth open. I had my mouth open to say "yeah," and the candle wax just all dumped right into my mouth and then immediately hardened, so A) I couldn't breathe and B) I had this immediate gag reflex. So I was sort of puking, but then there was this big wad of candle wax blocking me from puking, so I was pulling candle wax out of my mouth and out of my teeth and still playing and trying to sing. But that really wasn't so memorable for me.

Jeff: For me it was great.

Frank: It was more memorable for the crowd.

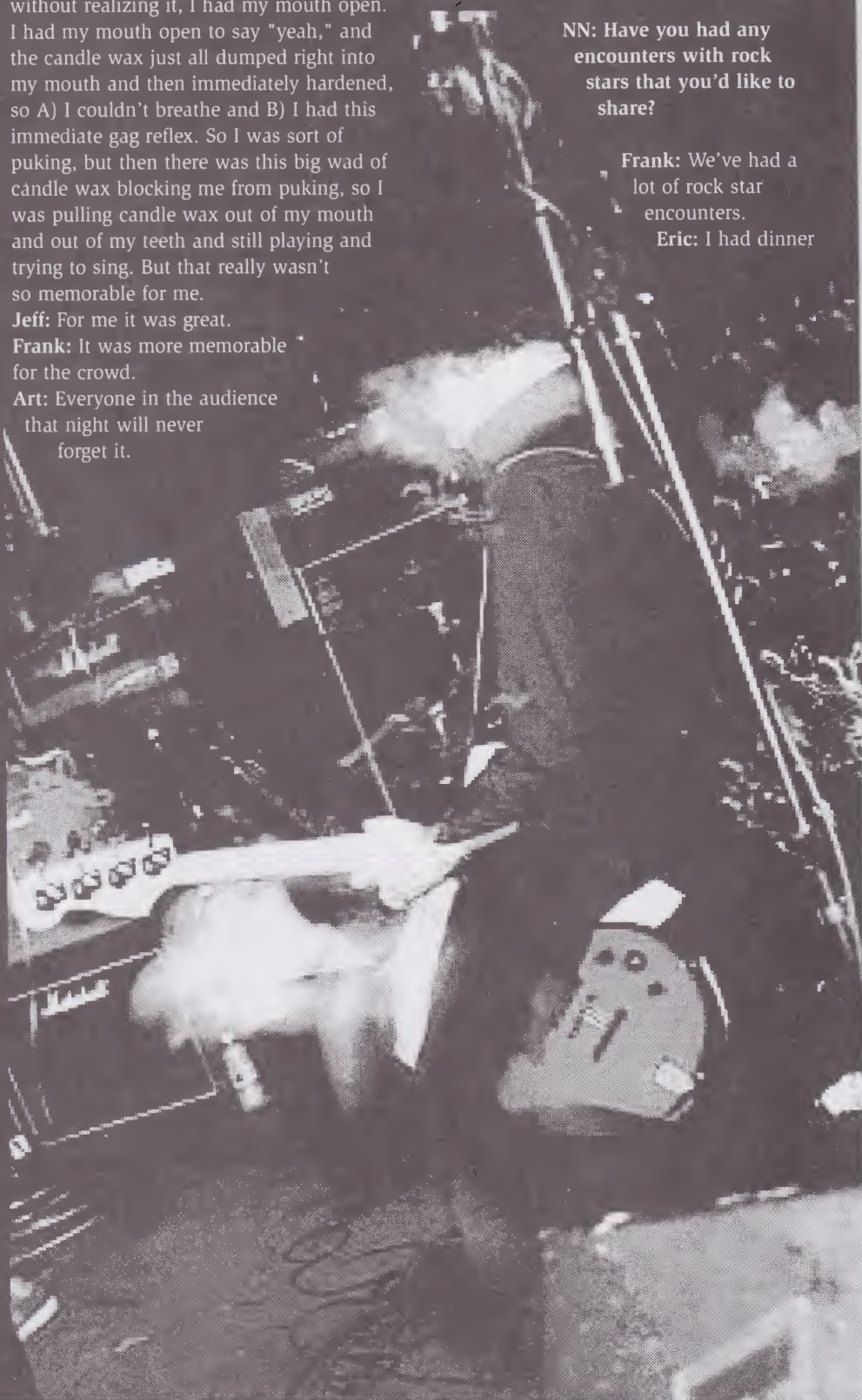
Art: Everyone in the audience that night will never forget it.

Frank: Yeah. You kind of have to ask an audience member what their most memorable shows are because for us they're all memorable and yet, bizarrely enough, none of them are memorable. They all just kind of blend in as one big out of control party. They are all great shows, and we rock out and sometimes these little weird things happen. Just playing a show itself is a memorable experience.

NN: Have you had any encounters with rock stars that you'd like to share?

Frank: We've had a lot of rock star encounters.

Eric: I had dinner



with Frank last night.

Frank: We've had a chance to jam with a lot of our heroes, and we've gotten yelled at by a lot of our heroes. They're all really memorable

NN: You got yelled at?

Art: Yeah, actually.

Frank: That is probably the most memorable.

Art: But we won't tell that story.

Frank: We are trying to get away from talking a lot of shit because we've made a lot of enemies over the years from being perceived as being shit-talkers. What it really is, is we just tell the truth. But a lot of people do things that they don't want other people to know about and, quite often, we're not ones to cover up what people do behind closed doors. So if someone asks us, "What's this person like?" We'll tell you exactly what that person is like. If a person happens to spew a lot of bullshit, we'll tell you that they are full of shit. It's just that a lot of times people come back to us and say, "Why did you say I was full of shit?" "Well, because you are." But we're trying to learn from our mistakes.

NN: Every day is a learning experience.

Frank: Every day IS a learning experience, so now we are just trying to keep our mouths shut.

Art: Everyone's great.

Eric: I have one. When I first moved to L.A., I had been living here for about a week, and I went to the rock 'n' roll Ralphs on Sunset. It was a Friday night, about

11:00 o'clock, and I walked in and, standing right there in the produce section squeezing cantaloupe, was Phil "the animal" Taylor from Motörhead. He had on a full-length leather trench coat, leather pants, snakeskin cowboy boots - dressed to the nines - squeezing cantaloupe.

Frank: I have the best star experience.

When I was at Best Buy, about a month ago, I turned around and standing right in front of me was Rip Taylor.

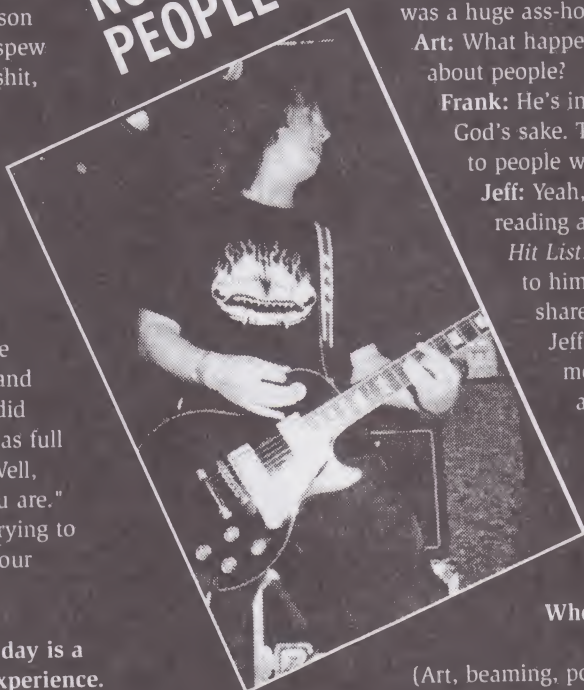
Eric: Is he a rock star?

Frank: As far as I'm concerned, he's the ultimate rock star.

Jeff: I thought he was dead.

Frank: Oh,

"A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK THAT WE'RE DICKS, AND WE'RE REALLY NOT. WE JUST TELL THE TRUTH, AND PEOPLE DON'T LIKE IT."



(Art, beaming, points to himself.)

NN: Wow, good job. I'm impressed.

Art: They're more the writer types, and I'm more of a visual type of person.

Frank: As you can tell from his image. (laughs) [Frank is referring to Art's paint-splattered jeans and well-worn t-shirt.]

Art: In other words, when there's

something that needs to be done that is tedious, they just give it to me.

Frank: That is pretty much what it comes down to.

Art: There will be fabulous new games on our Website.

Frank: Yeah. There will be arcade games on our Website. Each band member has his own arcade game. It's going to be sweet. Our new Website address is www.thestreetwalkincheetahs.com

NN: Do you guys plan to continue with the online tour diaries?

Art: I don't know.

Frank: As much as we can. We always sort of mean to do that, and we last about two or three entries and then we just get busy. Usually we'll start a tour and it's like day one, day two, and a month later, "Well, as you can see we completely failed with the tour diaries." We try, but it's tough out there.

Jeff: After a while it gets kind of repetitive.

Art: We get too drunk.

Jeff: Exactly. "We drank all day, then played, then got drunk again. Day 6: We drank all day, then got drunk, then played then got even more drunk....see Day 4."

Frank: Yeah, so there really isn't much of a point.

NN: Will the Cheetahs be doing any more collaborative work with other artists in the near future?

Frank: Not right now, but you never know what could happen. Right now we are trying to concentrate on our new record. We had a couple of years where we were lucky enough to jam with a lot of our heroes and collaborate with people, and those were great times. We made some good music but, at the same time, we don't really want to be seen as a retro band or a backing band, so we just kind of decided that once this record came out we'd just concentrate on it.

NN: What is the biggest misconception that people seem to have about the Streetwalkin' Cheetahs?

Frank: That we're dicks! (general laughter) A lot of people think that we're dicks, and we're really not. We just tell the truth, and people don't like it.

NN: Well, in general, most people don't like to hear the truth about themselves.

Frank: That's exactly it. Especially not in print. (laughs)

NN: What do the Cheetahs have in store for the rest of the year?

Eric: Tour, tour, tour.

Frank: A lot of touring. This Saturday we are playing the Hard Rock in Vegas with the Supersuckers. Then we are going out for about two weeks with the B-Movie Rats and doing some dates with Zeke and Tad's new band Hog Molly. We're playing at SXSW and have some dates with the Hangmen. Then we'll be going out on various punk tours. We're basically going out with D.I., but we are also doing some dates with Poison Idea, D.O.A., Fear, and Agent Orange. We are also hoping to go out on another tour this summer...

Art: Rock, rock, and more rock.

NN: Ten years from now, do you think other musicians will be citing the Cheetahs as an influence?

Art: God, no! (laughs)

Frank: The biggest influence the Cheetahs will have will probably be our members [playing] in other bands.

Art: Our legacy will be that we are the breeding ground for many other bands.

Frank: If

anything, hopefully, we will make some good records that people will like to listen to. How influential we'll be...who knows? But, I think it would be nice if people still actually listened to our records ten years from now and remembered who we were. If we came up in a conversation, I would hope they would say "I saw [the Cheetahs] live one time and they kicked ass."

Eric: Why are you talking in the past tense? I'd like to think that in the future we could still be playing.

Art: Yeah, right. Come on.

Frank: I give this band another three, four months tops. (laughs) You know what? I have a life to lead here, cha cha. Ten years, Jesus.

NN: Ten years from now Frank will be in a wheelchair.

Frank: Yeah. Are you kidding? My ankles aren't going to last that long. I'll be hobbling around on a cane. Honestly, who knows what is going to happen ten years from now? At this point we made a bunch of records, and we'll make a bunch more. If people still listen to them and think of them as good records, that is good enough for me.

NN: Is there a single word that describes you best?

Art: Perfection.

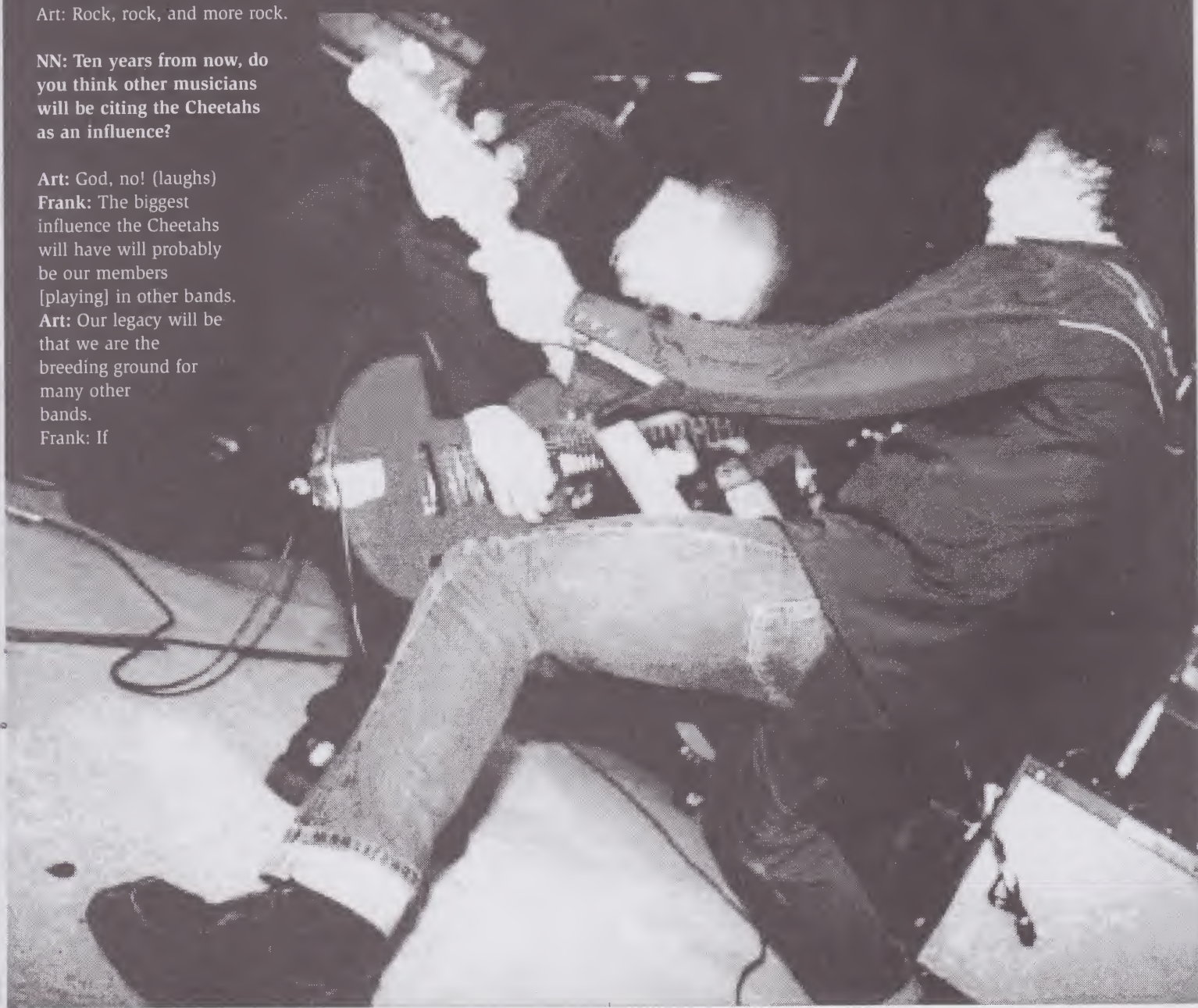
Jeff: Illiterate.

Frank: Incredible.

Eric: Drummer

NN: Who is your personal hero?

Frank: Art Jackson



Eric: Iggy Pop

Jeff: Me.

Art: Linus Pauling. If ya don't know who he was, it doesn't matter.

NN: Did you make any New Years Resolutions?

Jeff: To keep smoking.

Frank: I have quit smoking pot for a while. I smoked every day for the last decade or

So, and decided to take a break.

Art: No. Why set myself up for a big fall?

Eric: To make a living playing and creating music.

NN: What is your view on the current state of music?

Frank: It kinda sucks.

Art: It pretty much sucks, but I think everybody has felt that way in their time.

Eric: Dismal, with glimmers of hope.

Jeff: It's great. Let the plastic replicates like 'N SYNC and Britney take over. It keeps the underground alive.

NN: What do you think the next big trend in music will be?

Art: Afro-core - African hardcore.

Eric: Teen hermaphrodites rapping in Spanish to techno-industrial speed-metal.

Jeff: Robots as pop stars.

Frank: The Streetwalkin' Cheetahs will catapult up the charts and every band will try to sound like us. Either that or Japanese funk will rule the world.

NN: What do you think the Cheetahs will be remembered for?

Art: Our untimely demise, whenever that comes.

Jeff: Our triumphant reunion show at Madison Square Garden.

Frank: Hopefully for our songs, but probably for raising hell on stage and breaking things.

Eric: Making the world safe again for ass-

kicking rock & roll

NN: What is your current favorite record?

Frank: C.O.C. - *America's Volume Dealer*

Jeff: AC/DC - *High Voltage*

Eric: "Current favorite" or favorite current? *Revolver* by the Beatles would be the former; *Kid A* by Radiohead would be the latter.

Art: Tricky Woo - *Sometimes I Cry*

NN: What is the most embarrassing record in your collection?

Eric: ABBA's *Greatest Hits*

Art: *It's A Sunshine Day* - (the best of) The Brady Bunch

Frank: Paul Young - *No Parlez*

Jeff: All of them.

NN: Do you have a personal credo?

Jeff: Buy me cigarettes. That is my credo.

Frank: I like rock 'n' roll.

Art: Nothing I say would be of interest to anybody.

Eric: Rock 'n' roll is not about who can play the best guitar or the fastest lick. It's about attitude, and the Streetwalkin' Cheetahs are loaded with attitude.

Frank: Although, ironically, I can play the

best guitar.

Jeff: Okay, here's my quote. We are the most humble band out there, and the greatest.

Art: We are simultaneously the greatest and the most humble. (laughs)

NN: So after all these years, are you still having fun?

Art: No, we're just dicks. (laughs)

Frank: You know what the weird thing is? We never had fun. Ironically, it started off a complete drag, and it has pretty much gone downhill from there. (laughs) No, seriously, the only reason we do this is for fun. Sometimes touring can be fairly grueling, and sometimes you'll come home penniless. It's a lot of hard work, but it is completely worth it because it is fun. The shows are fun. We get along great. We like to make music together. We like to write songs together. There's a certain joy in watching that whole process of writing a song, then rehearsing it, then recording it, then taking it to the stage. As soon as this gets boring, I hope we have the good sense to stop. If it's boring for us, God knows how boring it will be for the audience. →



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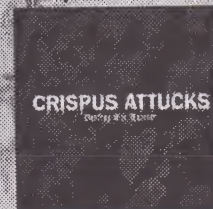
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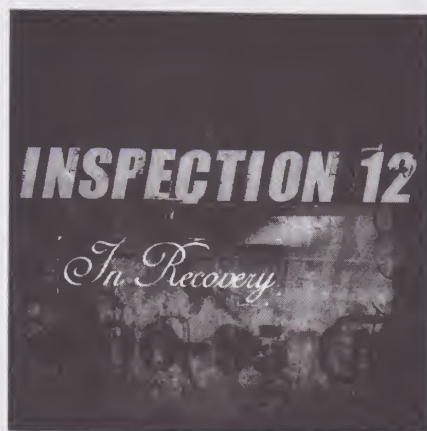


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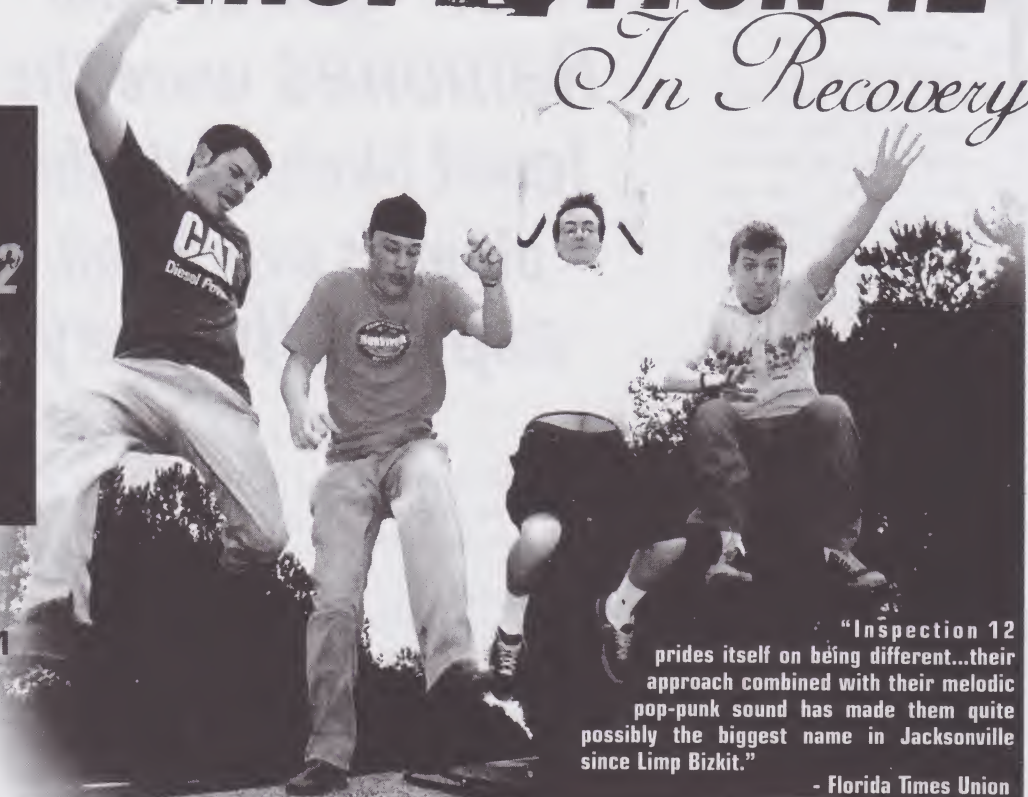
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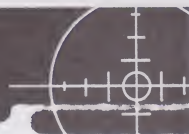


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- Florida Times Union



JOEY RAMONE IS DEAD, AND I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD, EITHER!

The Monday following Easter in Manhattan's East Village was stained with high weirdness. It was clear, bright, sunny, very Spring-like, when it really should have been just *pissing* down rain. Flags should have been flying at half-mast, but they weren't. The entire community felt like it was running through its paces in a daze, in numb disbelief over the previous day's events. "I tell ya," Mojo Guitars' jovial proprietor, Chris Cush, shrugged, "this is like the day that John Kennedy died."



I wouldn't know. I wasn't even a notion in Papa's groin when JFK bit it in Dallas, so that's no gauge that I can use. But I can guarantee that for me and likely many others, Easter Sunday will henceforth be known as anniversary of the day Joey Ramone died.

God, that was a fucking sledgehammer to the gut. The Ramones were a thread to my life as long as memory allowed. I don't know about you, but life has often felt as if it was lived to the Ramones' peculiar rhythm and time signatures: Dee Dee counting ONETWOTHREEFAH at dawn or whenever your day begins, and then you're off, galloping to those deadly sixteenth notes in a blazing four-four time. And while life may not be lived in the Ramones' beloved two-minute songbursts, it feels that way much of the time, doesn't it? Maybe that's why the Ramones always felt — always *feel* — so RIGHT!

They felt right before I even heard them, when I saw them staring back from the pages of...I dunno, *Creem*, maybe? *Circus*, perhaps? Those who know me and my weird thoughtstreams know my belief that rock is supposed to look the way it sounds. And Johnny, Joey, Dee Dee, Tommy, Marky, Richie, and C.J. gave good visual — stripped-down, rugged, adolescent, cartoonish, a Hanna-Barbara street gang. When I saw 'em do "Rock 'n' Roll

High School" on "Sha Na Na," I knew that neither my eyes nor my ears had deceived me.

I got *End Of The Century* for Christmas that year. Shortly after, I bought *Rocket To Russia* on 8-track(!!!), and I liked that one even better. Once I got a little more sophisticated, I could pinpoint the roar of the Stooges in Johnny's non-stop rhythm guitar assault, the plaintive cry of Ronnie Spector in Joey's bleat. But at 14, 15 years of age, I only knew how good these tunes felt, how they made me wanna bounce off my bed and into my bedroom walls, that they sounded like the Beach Boys on a Pixie Stixx bender with big fuckin' Marshall amps, the perfect AM Top 40 transistor radio Dubble Bubble rock band. And why they weren't burning up the airwaves and forcing Casey Kasem to force back the bile and paste on his happy face while wrapping his lips around their name every Sunday morning was a complete mystery to me.

Seeing them live soon after was a fucking revelation. I've no idea if it was the age at which I experienced them (and, shortly beforehand, Patti Smith and the Clash, then Motorhead and Iggy shortly after), but like all the other bands I saw in that timeframe, the Ramones seemed larger-than-life, heroic, absolute gods teaching me about life, love, how to dance, how to dress. Yet, for "gods," the Ramones were the least likely gods this planet's ever seen, especially Joey: A stick insect in a black leather jacket, all hair and shades, his gangly frame barely supported by his spine. He looked like he might snap in half every time he suddenly jerked away from his mic or thrust the stand in the air. But as he and his fellow Ramones bashed out what seemed like 116

songs in 15 minutes, all locomotive pacing and ONETWOTHREEFAH and Dee Dee jumping up and down like Pete Townshend's dumb four-string cousin and a mean and moody Johnny machinegunning us down with his Mosrite, sounding that night just like the *It's Alive* import album, the sheer power they generated transformed them into something beautiful. I didn't want to know at that moment about the Stones or the Who or Zeppelin or Elvis or anybody else. I *knew* the Ramones were the World's Greatest Rock 'n' Roll Band.

They became an obsession, just like the Pistols or the Clash or Buzzcocks or any other favorite from my teenage years. I named my old band the Hormones in cockeyed tribute, stemming from a high school incident when an old girlfriend hadn't heard me correctly as I raved about my favorite band in homeroom one day. ("Are they really called the Hormones?") I saved for weeks from my paper route profits to get a black leather jacket, so I could be, as I proudly informed the disbelieving girl in the Harley shop, Just Like The Ramones! ("You've got to be KIDDING!") And since Johnny Ramone doggedly insisted that the only way to play rock 'n' roll rhythm guitar was to downstroke, then I, too, would never

For "gods," the Ramones were the least likely gods this planet's ever seen, especially Joey.

stray from the path of the downstroke (even though my bigger interest in the Sex Pistols led me to favor Steve Jones' beloved Gibsons over Mosrites).

Once I began writing about rock music, it was a given that my coverage of the Ramones would be incessant, from the pages of my old 'zine *Noise Noise Noise* up to my interviewing Joey for their page in the Lollapalooza tour programme, just as the Ramones were calling it quits. I ended up interviewing them dozens of times, beginning with a rather disastrous attempt at interviewing Joey on their "Halfway To Sanity" tour (which, I must confess, was my own fault for being so ill-prepared, nervous, and star-struck, this being the first time I had gotten up close to my heroes). Every encounter I had with them in print afterwards was sheer joy, however, especially where Joey was concerned. I personally will never forget Joey telling me hilarious tales of his father Noel giving him songs that he'd composed for the Ramones, or enthusing over ancient Love LPs, or vividly recalling seeing the Who play their first US dates on a Murray The K multi-band extravaganza. Somewhere, I even have a hilarious tape of Joey reciting the words to "Bonzo Goes To Bitburg" so I could get 'em down for a benefit the Hormones did for Toys For Tots, where we played an entire set's worth of Ramones hits. ("Hang on, let me go put the record on — I forgot that line, myself!")

After I moved up to NYC, I learned Joey was not an uncommon presence around the Village. You could count on him cheering on D Generation or any number of other local bands, or fronting his own annual Xmas and birthday parties, or even just walking around St. Mark's. I'd also heard of the lymphatic cancer that was kept private until maybe a month before his death, and kept my mouth as shut along with everyone else. Hey, if it was the public's business, I figured Joey would have held a press conference. And though I try to take nothing for granted where it comes to my teenage heroes, it just never felt all that out-of-the-ordinary to just run into Joey someplace. But out of all my encounters with him, it will be the very last time I saw Joey alive that I will cherish above all my memories.

NY Press was hosting a sort of living history of New York rock at the Bowery Ballroom a year ago, and George Tabb asked if I'd guest with Furious George on a rendition of "Sonic Reducer." (After all, as I quipped at the beginning of my spot, "Stiv Bators couldn't make it tonight. He hasn't been feeling too good lately!") I went through my whole sub-Iggy Pop routine — wrapping the mic around my neck, diving into the third row...twice! Shortly after walking offstage, I bumped into Joey.

"Hey, man!" he enthused. "That was the best thing I've seen all evening! You were fucking great!"

I was naturally taken aback. "Thanks, Joey! That's quite a compliment!"

"No," he corrected, "that's not a compliment. That's the truth. You are fucking great! Keep it up!"

As I face having to completely reassemble Napalm Stars after we succumbed to whatever evils consume rock

TIM STEGALL

bands, the one thing that's kept my spirits up has been Joey's last words to me. To have an initial inspiration give you the thumbs up is the best validation one could ask for. Still, hearing that Joey had lost his five year battle to lymphoma on Easter Sunday ripped my heart out like little else could. This was no sordid rock star death a la Thunders or Cobain. Joey Ramone was a nice man who just happened to have sung for one of the late 20th Century's most important rock bands, a guy who would have had billions in the bank if influence paid royalties. He was also an example of the redemptive powers of rock 'n' roll: Remember how I remarked about what an unlikely rock star he made? And yet this gangly, gawky geek touched my life, and yours, and that of everyone who reads this magazine and had or has anything to do with punk rock and its attendant culture. And anyone who would deny that is a goddamned liar, pure and simple. Now Joey's dead, and I bawled like a baby for 24 hours straight and played "I Remember You" incessantly. This fucking hurts worse than anything I could imagine.

I called my mom in utter grief that day. I had to know:

"Mom, was this what it felt like when Elvis died?"

"I guess so, son," she replied, remembering the endless hours she heard *Rocket To Russia* blasting from my teenage bedroom. "I guess so." ⊕

TIM STEGALL, better-known these days as *Tim Napalm*, the guitar-smashing frontman for NYC glampunk kings *Napalm Stars*, used to write about punk rock for too many magazines. He also used to lead a band called *the Hormones* a few of you may have once cared about.



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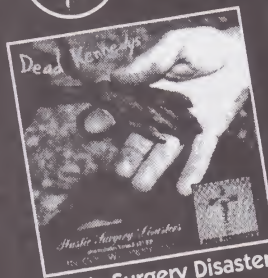
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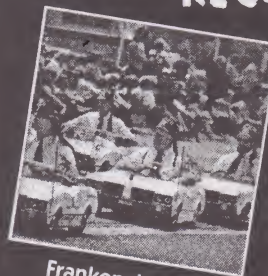
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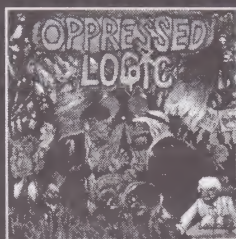
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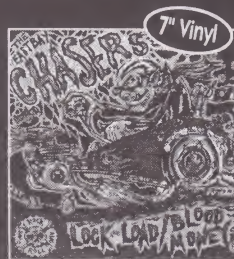
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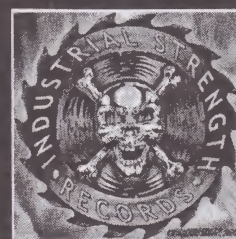
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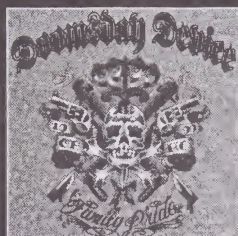
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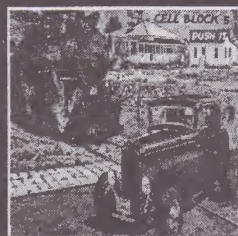
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AMERICA'S FIRST EVER POSTHUMOUSLY-CONDUCTED INTERVIEW WITH JOEY RAMONE

NØRB: (fumbling with tape recorder): ...okay, testing, testing...

JOEY: 1-2-3-4.

NØRB: All right, i think it's working...you ready, Joey?

JOEY: I don't care.

NØRB: Okay then, here we go: We're here today with deceased singer Joey Ramone of the Ramones, in, uh...where exactly IS this, Joey?

JOEY: The garden of serenity, the garden of serenity.

NØRB: Right, right. Anyway, i don't know if you'll recall this, but we met once before, at the Ramones tribute show at the Continental.

JOEY: I remember you, OO-oo-OO-oo.

NØRB: Heh, i saw you leaving after our set with sort of a puzzled expression on your face — what did you think when you saw me hopping around onstage singing nothing but Circle Jerks songs?

JOEY: Skeleton dance, i curse this day.

NØRB: That bad, huh?

JOEY: Everytime I eat vegetables it makes me think of you.

NØRB: Geez, i'm sorry. You want me to leave?

JOEY: I want you arow-ound. I want you arow-ound.

NØRB: Okay, thanks, Joey. No hard feelings. So, how do you like being dead?

JOEY: I'm against it. I'm against it.

NØRB: Really?

JOEY: I wanna lih-ive. I want to live my life.

NØRB: Wow, that's too bad. Well, are you familiar with the concept of reincarnation?

JOEY: Second verse, same as the first.

NØRB: That's right. Are you up for it?

JOEY: I don't want to live my life again. Not again.

NØRB: Uhh...it seems like you've got some issues here, Joey. Anyway, let's start at the beginning: Where were you born?

JOEY: I was born on a roller coaster ri-ee-yi-ide.

NØRB: I see. And you made your home where?

JOEY: Holiday Inn's the only home i know. I know. I know. I know.

NØRB: Okay, and what have you been doing since your tragic passing?

JOEY: Hanging out in 100B, watching *Get Smart* on TV.

NØRB: Fair enough. Now, Joey, you died of lymphoma. When you went in for your initial diagnosis, what did the doctors tell you?

JOEY: You sound like you're sick. You look like you're sick too.

NØRB: Well, what did you tell them?

JOEY: I wanna be well. I wanna be well.

NØRB: Joey, i heard that you left the doctor's office that day in rather high spirits, unusual for someone diagnosed with a potentially terminal illness. Can you tell our readers why that is?

JOEY: I just met a nurse that I could go for.

NØRB: Really?

JOEY: We was young and in love.

NØRB: What do you suppose she's doing right now?

JOEY: She says she's babysitting tonight.

NØRB: You thought you really found the girl for you?

JOEY: Yeah yeah, she's the one.

NØRB: Wow, dying immediately after meeting the love of your life is a most tragic circumstance.

JOEY: Why is it always this way?

NØRB: Yeah, why are we always traumatically separated from those we love the most?

JOEY: Oh I don't know why. Oh I don't know why.

NØRB: Is there a bright side we can look at?

JOEY: Perhaps they'll die, oh yeah. Die, oh yeah. Die, oh yeah. Die, oh yeah.

NØRB: Death has certainly diminished none of your eternal optimism. On that note, did you actually meet the Grim

Reaper? What were your thoughts when you first saw him?

JOEY: It's gonna be the death of me. It's gonna be the end you see.

NØRB: What did he say to you?

JOEY: Hey, Ho! Let's Go!

NØRB: Yeah, that's what my buddy Tom told me you said.

JOEY: Timebomb baby, yeah yeah!

NØRB: Oh, i didn't realize you knew him. What did you tell the Grim Reaper?

JOEY: I don't wanna

go. Hey Romeo!

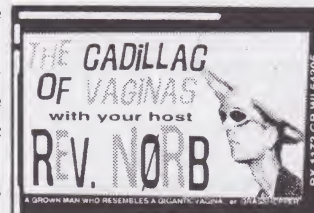
NØRB: What was his response to that?

JOEY: You don't know what I can do with this axe. Chop off your head so you better relax!

NØRB: Wow, what a hardass. I assume he gave you enough time to make your last wishes known, though. What did you tell your friends and family?

JOEY: I don't wanna be buried in a Pet Sematary!

NØRB: What did they tell you?



NØRB: HEH, I SAW YOU LEAVING AFTER OUR SET WITH SORT OF A PUZZLED EXPRESSION ON YOUR FACE — WHAT DID YOU THINK WHEN YOU SAW ME HOPPING AROUND ONSTAGE SINGING NOTHING BUT CIRCLE JERKS SONGS?

JOEY: SKELETON DANCE, I CURSE THIS DAY.

HIT SQUAD

JOEY: Hang on a little bit longer. Hang on, you're a goner.

NØRB: Man, i'd be rattled if i knew i was going to have to face death; what requests did you make to your doctors to get through your last day on earth?

JOEY: Twenty-twenty-twenty-four hours to go, I wanna be sedated.

NØRB: You must have had some hellacious medical bills. How could you afford treatment?

JOEY: High risk insurance! High risk insurance!

NØRB: Being bedridden, you must have watched quite a bit of television. What did you think of that show *Survivor*?

JOEY: Eat that rat! Eat that rat!

NØRB: Now, i heard that your condition took a turn for the worse when you neglected to wear a heart monitor. Any comments on that?

JOEY: Next time, I'll listen to my heart. Next time, well I'll be smart.

NØRB: Hindsight is a wonderful thing. I don't know if you knew this or not, but you died on Easter Sunday. Being Jewish, do you know much about Easter?

JOEY: I heard about the Easter bunny.

NØRB: Yeah, that's pretty much the best part of the whole holiday. Now, for those in the *Hit List* readership who are not dead yet (a figure that is almost a full 50% of the *Hit List* demographic!), what happens after one dies? What was your spirit doing after it left your body?

JOEY: Soaring like a super hero past the edge of Disneyland.

NØRB: That's cool. What's the main difference between your spirit form and your corporeal form?

JOEY: Now I got glowing eyes.

NØRB: Oh yeah, i almost couldn't tell because of the sunglasses. Does that give you any manner of weird vision powers?

JOEY: See through you like cellophane.

NØRB: Really? Okay, then, if i'm so transparent, tell me what my favorite band of all time is!

JOEY: R-A-M-O-N-E-S, R-A-M-O-N-E-S Ramones!

NØRB: Wow, i didn't know you were allowed to speak in Motörhead covers! What do you think about Lemmy?

JOEY: Wart hog! Wart hog!

NØRB: Good one! Be that as it may, after your spirit had come before the Pearly Gates (note: this is not a Pearl Harbor & the Explosions reference. Shut up and dance!), the parade of all the other freshly-departed souls up to the hallowed clerical

desk of St. Peter must have been quite a sight to behold; what were your thoughts when you first saw this spectacle unfolding?

JOEY: They're forming in a straight line.

NØRB: Were St. Peter and the other angels cool, or did they get on your ass about shit you did on Earth?

JOEY: They got complaints about everything. It's us against them! It's us against theh-hem! It's us against them!

NØRB: Fuckin' pricks.

JOEY: Can't please all the people all the time, all the people all the time, but then they don't please me.

NØRB: Yeah, you know they'll just rake you over the coals for no real reason.

JOEY: What they want, I don't know.

NØRB: You must've had a rough time pleading your case. What did you tell them to get them to let you in?

JOEY: Now I wanna be a good boy. I don't wanna be bad.

NØRB: Did you make up any good excuses for your conduct while on Earth?

JOEY (indignantly): Live my life as I choose, I paid the price, paid my dues. You know I need no alibi!

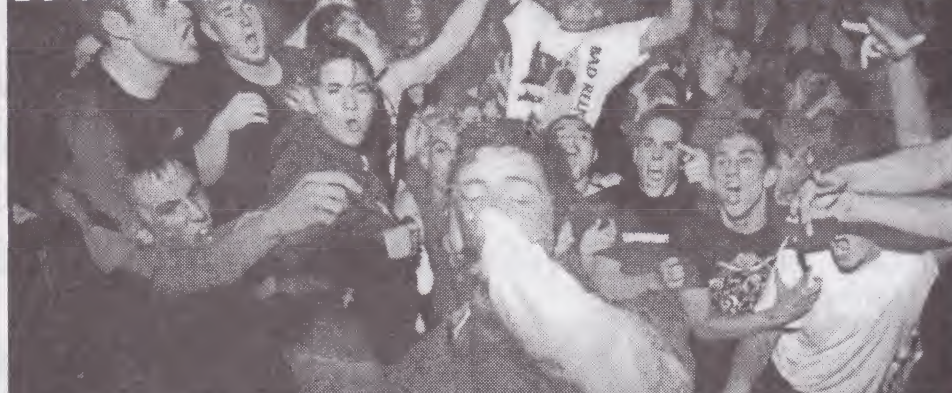
NØRB: Oh, come on, what did you really tell them?

JOEY: It's TV's fault why I am this way.

NØRB: Yeah, they love that one! The only thing they like more than that is when people blame their actions on the backmask-

NØRB: You must have had some hellacious medical bills. How could you afford treatment?
JOEY: High risk insurance! High risk insurance!

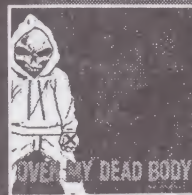
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ing on Ozzy records!

JOEY: Ask Ozzy, Zappa or me, we'll show ya what it's like to be free.

NØRB: Stop demeaning yourself by name-dropping those chumps!

JOEY: You're gonna get a blood bath.

NØRB: I'm serious. It was fucking sad when you kept trying to associate yourself with all those Rock Legend Losers at the end of your careers. What were you thinking?

JOEY: Swallow my pride, oh yeah. Swallow my pride, oh yeah.

NØRB: I still think it was kind of gay.

JOEY: Oh don't you know you make me want to smash you?

NØRB: What makes you think you could?

JOEY: I'm a very nice guy, very sincere, in real good shape I have no fear.

NØRB: One headbutt to your nuts and you'll be singing a different tune, Mr. Riboflavin!

JOEY: If you think you can, well, come on man. I was a Green Beret in Viet Nam!

NØRB: You're still pissed that my band recorded a better version of "End Of The Century" than yours did, and for about \$99,575 less!

JOEY: I'm gonna burglarize your home!

NØRB: I'm gonna vandalize your grave!

JOEY: You better shut it up!

NØRB: *You* better shut it up!

JOEY: I'm gonna beat you up!

NØRB: I'm gonna beat *you* up!

JOEY: Is that some kinda warning to protect me?

NØRB: Take it for what it's worth, P.F. Sloan!

JOEY: You are all the same, jelly bean brain!

NØRB: "JELLY BEAN BRAIN"?!! *Them's fightin' words!* I'll give you three seconds to come over here and apologize!

JOEY: I can't make it on time.

NØRB: Have at thee!

(Norb and Joey briefly scrap. Due to their mutually lanky physiques little damage is inflicted on either party)

NØRB: You cheated!

JOEY: I had no advantage over you.

NØRB: My Mets hat was dislodged in my spastic struggle!

JOEY: They say you're just an awkward kid, you flipped your lid, you flipped your lid.

NØRB: Not to be confused with flipping my wig, which is an entirely different band. Speaking of wigs, tell us a little bit about Marky.

JOEY: Plays an old log drum; he's primitive, barely human.

NØRB: I think we all suspected as much. Anyway, you're pretty scrappy for an angel. You just won't quit.

JOEY: Halo 'round my head, too tough to die.

NØRB: Uh, whatever. Now, i understand that you weren't surprised that you wound up here, inside the Pearly Gates (that still isn't a Pearl Harbor & the Explosions reference). Why not?

JOEY: 4-5-6-7 all good cretins go to heaven.

NØRB: Fair enough. What did they tell you after they let you in?

JOEY: Here's your new home. That's where you must be.

NØRB: Were the other angels friendly? What did they tell you when you got in?

JOEY: Gabba gabba, we accept you, we accept you, one of us.

NØRB: Have you seen anything noteworthy up here yet?

JOEY: We came across a miracle, there was beer in the soda machine.

NØRB: Being a creature of the spirit, then, i assume you have divine foreknowledge of who's going to heaven and who's going to wind up elsewhere. Could you tell us some of the people who are

REV.NØRB

gonna wind up spending eternity in hell?

JOEY: Jack Nicholson, Clint Eastwood, 10cc.

NØRB: Yeah, i think Jack Nicholson, like most Laker fans, probably has a courtside seat reserved at the lake of fire! Say, Joey, can i get some insider sports gambling information from you, or is that against the rules?

JOEY: I can't give you anything. I can't give you anything.

NØRB: I understand. Now, i heard that you donated your body to science. Do you know the whereabouts of any of your harvested organs yet?

JOEY: My brain is hanging upside down.

NØRB: Really? I don't think your family knows about this.

JOEY: Now I guess I'll have to tell 'em that I got no cerebellum.

NØRB: Can the doctors actually make use of it? Is it a keeper? What did they say when they took it out and inspected it?

JOEY: Bad bad brain. Bad bad brain.

NØRB: So what happens if you want it back? You might have to make some calls to high-ranking government officials to get them to turn it over.

JOEY: Ring me ring me ring me up the President.

NØRB: I didn't know you knew any world leaders!

JOEY: I'm friends with the President, friends with the Pope.

NØRB: Where do you suppose the President is right now?

JOEY: 53rd & 3rd, trying to turn a trick.

NØRB: No doubt! Now, after removing all needed organs and body parts, i understand you're going to be cremated...

JOEY: I'm smoking, baby, I'm smoking, oh baby!

NØRB: Jeez, that seems awfully uncomfortable. Is there any upside to being dead?

JOEY: No Christmas cards to send.

NØRB: Is there anything you need from the outside world?

JOEY: A bottle of wine, a tube of glue.

NØRB: Then what?

JOEY: Happy happy happy all of the time.

NØRB: Well, amigo, I'll see what i can do for ya.

JOEY: Hurry hurry hurry, before I go loco!

NØRB: Can do! Have times been kinda tough up here?

JOEY: Ran out of paint and roach spray too.

NØRB: I've got a bottle of Elmer's School Glue in the car, d'you want that?

JOEY: That just stinks. It's not for me!

NØRB: Are you sure?

JOEY: I've had enough of that crummy stuff.

NØRB: I understand. In any event, i'd better get going — i've got a hell of a drive ahead of me.

JOEY: It's a long way back.

NØRB: Speaking of which, i'd probably better take a leak before i leave. When do you suppose Stiv Bators will be out of the bathroom?

JOEY: Tonight, tonight, well all right!

NØRB: He's been in there an awfully long time. What was he doing before he entered?

JOEY: Eating chicken vindaloo.

NØRB: I guess he needed lunch. Hmmm...maybe i better check on him.

(Norb opens bathroom door)

NØRB: AAAAAAAGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH!!! STIV!!!
GOD!!! THE STENCH!!! THE STENCH!!!

STIV: I am an evil boy.

JOEY: You should never have opened that door. ⊕



STILETTO BOYS

THE STILETTO BOYS MAY BE ON THE VERGE OF ALIENATING THE HEART AND SOUL OF THEIR FAN BASE. WHY? BECAUSE THEY JUST MADE THE BEST DAMN RECORD OF THEIR LIVES.

BY JOSH RUTLEDGE

The punk rock world first got an earful of the Stiletto Boys back in 1997, when Zodiac Records released the then-defunct Lancaster, Pennsylvania band's "8-Track" EP. "8-Track", a sloppy, poorly-recorded slab of no-fi rock 'n' roll madness, quickly became the stuff of legend. The band's infectious amalgamation of the Dead Boys and Dickies aroused punk vinyl junkies all over the world, and a reformed Stiletto Boys were back in the studio within a year. A second EP, "Attitude Adjuster", hit record shops in the summer of '98.

A year later, the band unleashed "Rockets And Bombs", a scalding collection of thrashy '77-style pop-n-roll anthems. The album held firmly to the band's classic punk foundation even as it showcased the boys' exceptional musical chops. The '77 punk revival had hits its peak, and the Stiletto Boys had delivered a tuneful punk rock long player in the tradition of the Buzzcocks, The Boys, and Rich Kids.

So how did the band decide follow up its impressive debut? Well, punk rock devotees who expected the Stiletto Boys to make "Rockets And Bombs, Part Two" may be

rather let down by the band's sophomore effort! "A Company Of Wolves", set for an early 2001 release on Pelado Records, finds the band taking the plunge into more sophisticated waters. A few songs retain the primal thud of the band's early hits, but the majority of the tracks are crunchy forays into the world of refined, mature POP (More Beatles, less Stiv Bators!).

Nearly a year in the making, "A Company Of Wolves" is an album that pushes the Stiletto Boys into new sonic territory. And while it certainly still ROCKS, it leaves behind the raging simplicity that characterized the band's early singles and first album. Produced by Curt Cash, this slick-sounding rock 'n' roll opus is certain to surprise those of you expecting a trashy garage record from Pennsylvania's hottest punk band!

"A Company Of Wolves" is the work of a band in transition. Having already challenged themselves to grow musically, the boys now look ahead to a third LP that will stand as a flawless display of pop



craftsmanship. In the meantime, the band is eager to find out how the punk crowd — still its audience of choice — reacts to its latest effort. I spoke to Stiletto Boys Sean Wolfe (vocals), Eric Benner (guitar), and Eric Garvin (bass) in late 2000 and questioned them about their band's past, present, and future.

Stiletto Boys interview by Josh Rutledge

Josh Rutledge: All right, men! Let's not fuck around with formalities! Tell the world exactly what the Stiletto Boys are all about and why everyone should buy your new album!

Sean Wolfe: Stiletto Boys in the year 2001 are about making great rock records...songs that transcend the true substance of our human existence. Songs

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that blow you away and make you feel something wonderful or terrible. "A Company of Wolves" is our true first attempt at breaking away from the shadows of our influences and evolving our own style of rock music. Our new record

has raised the bar quite a bit, but we're really happy with it.

Rutledge: You've been working on the new record for a long time now, but now it's ready to roll. Was it worth the wait?

How do you feel about this album now that it's done?

Eric Benner: Yeah, nine months is unheard of for putting out a record on a punk label. We were happy with it six months ago, but when we got the final back...None of us could believe it! It was better than we expected and definitely worth the time Curt put into it.

Rutledge: You didn't really have a whole lot of time to work on "Rockets And Bombs", the first album. Did you intentionally try and take your time with this new album so that you'd have the chance to be perfectionists with it? Production-wise, how will this record be different from the first one?

Eric Garvin: "Rockets and Bombs" was a rush job. This time around, it appeared it was gonna be the same thing as last time: one or two takes for every track. Instead we ended up re-writing half the album in the studio with help from our engineer and co-producer, Curt Cash. Plus Curt was moving to L.A. at the end of the year to find work as a recording assistant, so he wanted this project to be at the top of his portfolio.

Sean: This meant we were going to get one hell of a mix being that Curt's a bigger perfectionist than we are. Production-wise, there's no comparison between "A Company of Wolves" and "Rockets and Bombs". Our first LP was recorded in a week and mixed in 13 hours. This new record was recorded in two months and mixed in six months. And an entire MONTH was spent mastering it. It was worth the risk. Taking chances on doing something new with your music is the only reason for making a second album. It takes a lot of guts, but it's rewarding. It's what started punk rock in the first place. We just spent the last nine months of our lives making what we consider to be a great rock album, so pick it up and enjoy. I think we got it right this time.

Rutledge: Anyone who listens to this album will notice that it's a very different recording. It's NOT "Rockets And Bombs, Part 2" at all. From the start, were you planning to make a record that showed a lot of musical growth?

Benner: Our original goal on this new LP was to make "the best rock record ever made". You'd have to know us to realize

that when we say something like that, we REALLY mean it!!! Of course, once again we were rushed getting the material written for the date we had set for our recording session. Casey (the band's drummer — J.R.) was going to fly up from Alabama for two weeks. That gave us three days to rehearse these songs Casey had never heard before.

Sean: Casey has an amazing talent for pulling greatness out of his ass. He played the songs like he had been playing them for years. I guess we realized we were a little too ambitious in thinking this would be the best rock record ever made. Then we realized this was one hell of a punk rock record, and the NEXT record would be the best rock record ever made!!!

Rutledge: I'm sure you'd say that this is your best collection of songs to date. In what ways has this band improved over the years?

Garvin: We're learning to listen to each others' ideas, and we're definitely much better musicians than we were six years ago. We're fine-tuning our craft into something we hope will pass the test of time.

Rutledge: How do you feel about "Rockets And Bombs" now? At the time it came out, you were obviously excited. But when you hear those songs two years after recording them, what are your impressions?

Garvin: I still thinks it's a great punk rock document, but I think we've changed a lot since then. I don't listen to it that often anymore, but it was the logical next step from where we were at that time in our musical careers.

Rutledge: Do you think some of your older fans may be a bit disappointed in the pop direction of the new album? Are you expecting a lot of criticism from people who would prefer for you to just keep rehashing the Dead Boys and

Dickies influences?

Sean: Probably, but we have to stay the course we're on. We would like our audience to grow with us. Anyone who has heard "Young, Loud and Snotty" and then hears "The Lords and the New Creatures" for the first time is going to be surprised, if not shocked. The difference in the style and quality of the song-writing is tremendous. But it was a matter of maturing musically. The Dickies are one of the most talented group of musicians on the planet. "Idjit Savant" is one of the best records I own... a pop gem!!! That doesn't mean I don't enjoy "Dawn of the Dickies" anymore; it just means the Dickies grew up and finally got it right.

Rutledge: I know you're already excited about the NEXT album. What kinds of plans do you have for the next batch of songs that you're writing? Will you be making another big jump in terms of maturity and sophistication?

Benner: We're already hard at work on the next album. This next record will hopefully be the best rock record ever made. It should be the key ingredient we've been looking for. It will be a big jump, but it will still rock. We're working a lot with dynamics, breakdowns, and subtlety. That way when the song does rock out, you feel it like a ton of bricks. On our past records, all we did was rock...non-stop. But then there are no hills and valleys to take you on that roller coaster

ride you love so much.

Rutledge: How do you guys all feel about PUNK ROCK at this point? You've been hearing this music for years, yet you still seem to love it as much as ever. What does that say about the nature of punk rock? Wouldn't you say that bands like The Clash, Boys, and Damned were a hell of a lot more talented than they got credit for being?

Sean: Absolutely. Punk rock is about creating music on your own terms; it's about making music for yourself and not worrying about what anybody else thinks of it. Punk rock taught us how to make music in the first place. We'll always be rooted in punk rock. We just feel we've outgrown the need for labels. "Rock" is broad enough if anyone needs to classify us. The music of bands like the Damned, Boys, and The Clash changed drastically from the beginning of their careers to the end. It's as if they slowly became bored of what they were doing, so they raised the bar a bit to make the creation of music more challenging. And in the process, they

began writing better songs....until they became bored again and needed to raise the bar a bit more. This is how we view our own creative



endeavor, and the bar has been raised once again.

Rutledge: You've been essentially a studio band for a while now, but now you're getting ready to start playing out again. Is this something you're really committed to following through on? Would you like to play lots of gigs and do some touring?

Garvin: Well, Casey is pretty busy in Alabama. So we brought Rummy in. We met him through Ron Zodiac, and he's into making rock music with us. So it's a go!!! As far as touring goes, we'd love to, but our full-time jobs kind of own us right now, unfortunately. We hope to work out some mini-tours of parts of the U.S. before too long, and hopefully Europe, too. We're more into concentrating on writing our landmark record first.

Rutledge: How are things clicking when you practice? Is the magic still there? Are you fellows ready to rock!!!!

Benner: Yeah, it's going great. We played our first show with Rummy on Thanksgiving Night in Harrisburg at the Vault, and everyone seemed highly impressed. Needless to say, it was great!!



OUR ORIGINAL GOAL ON THIS NEW LP WAS TO MAKE "THE BEST ROCK RECORD EVER MADE". YOU'D HAVE TO KNOW US TO REALIZE THAT WHEN WE SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT, WE REALLY MEAN IT!!!

He's a perfect fit.

Rutledge: How tough has it been for you to keep this band going over the years? You've had to deal with some band members being separated by hundreds of miles, yet you've worked around that. Are you all really devoted to keeping this band together?

Garvin: Well, when Sean moved to Alabama in 1997, we weren't sure if we could write another album long-distance. But we did. And as soon as Sean moved back in 1999, Casey moved to Alabama. So we figured we could still make records, but we never thought we could find anyone who could hold a candle to Casey's drumming. But we did, and here we are six years later, already working on our 3rd full-length and playing shows again. We're full on into it.

Rutledge: What are your thoughts on the future and the Stiletto Boys? You all have to work day jobs and deal with the reality of surviving. Can you hold this band together over the long haul? Can you imagine yourselves still playing in this band in another 10 years?

Benner: It's funny because the only band that ever survived without touring regularly was the Beatles. In fact, in 1965 or '66, the Beatles decided to give up touring for good. They wanted to devote all their time to writing and recording, and we can definitely relate now that we've built our own studio. I think the band will stay together as long as our ideas keep flowing and we have the means to document them. The STILETTO BOYS will always be together in that capacity.

Rutledge: What inspires and influences you as artists these days? Are you still relying on your old records for inspiration? Are you excited by anything you're hearing now?

Sean: We're still influenced by 70's punk rock, but our influences are definitely expanding all the time. We also listen to a lot of Boomtown Rats, Elliot Smith, Beatles, Kinks, Flamin' Groovies, and Jon Brion. I have been spending a lot of time listening to The Damned's "Phantasmagoria" lately, as well as Queen's "A Day at the Races".

Rutledge: In general, what inspires you to make music and play in a band? What drives you to play rock 'n' roll?

Benner: Music is the only outlet that lets us shine out and forget about our worries and problems in our lives. We can do it on our own terms and have full control over it, molding and shaping it into something that reflects the powerful emotions we all experience in our lives. It gives us a voice to speak to the world with.

Rutledge: How does living in Lancaster, Pennsylvania shape this band? Are you bored or frustrated by your surroundings? Do you often tell yourself, "Damn, I want to get the hell out of here!"?

Garvin: We have a lot of close friends and family here. We all experience the feeling that we may spend the rest of our lives here if we don't get out soon, but we've lived here our whole lives. It's what you make of it that counts. Lancaster's a cool place compared to a lot of places. We have

Angry, Young and Poor, which rivals any of the great record stores in the U.S. To leave would be a cop out. Plus Philly, Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, D.C., and New York City are all relatively close.

Rutledge: Did it freak you out when you found out how many fans you had all over the world as a result of the "8-Track" EP? That record really took off, and people loved it. Why do you think people responded to those songs so passionately?

Sean: I think it came at a time when the big '77 resurgence was just beginning to show its face in the U.S. We were blown away by the response it got. Next thing we knew, people from all over the globe were requesting copies after we had sold out of them. So it was repressed...then repressed again. We weren't sure if anyone would appreciate it since so many kids were listening to 80's hardcore-style bands and other stuff that was far from 70's-style punk. It was a relief to see our first record become such a hit.

Rutledge: What is this band's ultimate goal? In the back of your mind, are there dreams of recording contracts and arena shows? What would you like to achieve?

Benner: Our ultimate goal is to create an album that will become a staple in everyone's record collection. An album of the same stature as "London Calling", "Sgt. Pepper's", or "Pet Sounds". A pop record to end all pop records.

Sean: We would love to be embraced by the music industry and be able to spend 100 grand on a record, but unfortunately the music industry is only interested in selling millions of copies to children and adults who have to be spoon-fed their favorite artists. If it was all based on the quality of music that a band produces, we'd probably have a chance.

Rutledge: Any final thoughts?

Garvin: The CD version of our new full-length, entitled "A Company of Wolves", will be available on Pelado Records, and the LP version entitled "Buzzbomb Sounds" will be available on High Society International. Also, visit our web site at: "<http://buzzbomb77.cjb.net>" and let us know what you think of the album. +

HIT SQUAD

THE PERILS OF ROCK AND ROLL DECADENCE

"I had a gig with Caged Heat one night at this club. The owner was a real piece of work. He had this office with all these dolls in it. I was in there talking to him about something, and he was molesting these dolls as I was talking to him. Not consciously or anything, just kind of caressing and stuff. He had this one real pretty one in particular that he seemed obsessed with. When we were about to play, I snuck into his office and grabbed that favorite doll to bring on stage with me. I don't even know what possessed me

*BAD OBSESSIONS
w/ THE SCORCHER*

to do that. Just on a whim, I guess, and when I got up there I barely even got the doll out when this guy totally loses it. He screams like a girl and comes racing towards me. I didn't really know what to do. I kind of panicked and threw it out into the crowd. It landed on some burning cigarette in an ashtray and burst into flames. This person dumped their drink on it but it was already too late, it was spreading to the table. The fire extinguisher put it out before the whole club burnt down. If that man hadn't been in total shock over the loss of his beloved doll, we probably would never have escaped with our equipment and lives. I don't think we are welcome back there."

-Jill Kurtz (Caged Heat)

"Several days prior to our Saturday January 28 gig at the Coach and Horses in Windsor, Ontario, Canada (right across from Detroit), the Trailer Park Sex Cowboys wrote a new song. The music was dark and incredibly sexual. Johnny said it reminded him of "cum running down the inside of a girl's leg". He quickly wrote the words around a bondage/S&M girl, and the song "Sadie Masochistic" was written. In the middle of the song, the song tempo goes from an aggressive grind to a slow psychosexual driving bassline. It was decided to make this slow interlude into a platform for Johnny to

talk to the audience. Now after their first few shows, the Sex Cowboys were beginning to build a rather loud and brave following of females, so an evil plan was hatched to test the loyalty of their fans. Just prior to the gig, all four members of the band masturbated into a pint glass. Then, Johnny added half a shot of Bailey's Irish Cream and combined this DNA Juice into a ghastly syrup of sorts. He kept this glass on stage with him. During the debut of "Sadie Masochistic", the plan unfolded. When the slow part arrived, Johnny began his monologue. In it, he demanded absolute loyalty from the female contingent of fans. He said that to be of the TPSC faithful, you must take a part of the TPSC inside you. He grabbed the glass, swirled it in the lights for all to see, and announced that "within this glass is the complete DNA of the Trailer Park Sex Cowboys," and that he was looking for a volunteer to come up to the stage. Several women cheered and finally one brave girl approached the stage. She appeared nervous and excited, all at once. Johnny handed her the Love Potion, and she held it in her hands. As the music swirled and the temp began to rise and fall with brutal sexuality, Johnny told her to drink it all down. And, after taking a deep breath, she did! The complete spunk of the band ran down her throat! And live, in front of over a hundred people! And so, the legend of the Goop Girl was born..."

-Johnny Ten Inch (Trailer Park Sex Cowboys)

SALVATION THROUGH SATURATION: NASH KATO

Rock stars come and go, but genuine rock and roll heroes — well, they lay a winning hand no matter who's dealing. The suavest monarch in this desperate land, the King Midas of the *Billboard* charts, Nash Kato took his wiseass power pop band, Urge Overkill, to the heights of Rock excess with giant guitars, killer hooks, and the best wardrobe since the commie-era New York Dolls. Theoretically. Urge stared out as a punk band in the early 80s, and were even on gnarly noise rock label Touch and Go for awhile, but Motown records, not Black Flag, fueled the Urge machine. Local success had them riding around town in horse-drawn carriages, Steve Albini publicly hated them, and the hustle for superstardom was on. Snagged from the obscure "Stull" EP, the Neil Diamond cover, "Girl, You'll be a Woman Soon", found its way into a pivotal scene in "Pulp Fiction", and suddenly the Urge were household names. "Saturation", Urge's first big-time major label record, is quite possible the greatest rock and roll record ever. With its winning combination of heavy, 70's-influenced rock, the crystal sheen pop choruses, and the overall vibe of rock and roll redemption, Urge brought the concept of total victory back to the masses. Their equally stunning follow-up, the double concept album "Exit The Dragon", was laced with introspection, and the millionaire song writing team of Nash Kato and Eddie "King" Roeser took divergent paths. Moody, darker songs like "This is No Place" and "Mistake" found Eddie enjoying the private jets and super models a lot less than Nash. In 1996, the band dissolved. Nobody's stepped up to the plate to meet their challenge since. Ever a gentleman of class, distinction, and leisure, Nash went on vacation in Costa Rica. For a good year or so. From the haze of this tropical hedonism came a clutch of glossy new hits that would soon find their way on to



A-PLUS IN ARSON CLASS: Caged Heat's doll scorcher-in-residence, Jill Kurtz

PHOTO: VIKI

Nash's first solo album. With his usual swarthy cheek, he named it "Debutante", scored some new white threads, and jumped back in the trenches to rebuild the empire. I caught up with the National Man right before he jetted off to Europe for a 6 month tour...

So, after Urge Overkill broke up, you split for an extended vacation in Costa Rica. That's the goddamn move, Nash...

Well, with Urge, there was such a tight schedule all the time, you never had the time to chill, or to wander around aimlessly. I thought it was the perfect opportunity to do that, and to get away from the music business for awhile. I packed my bag for a few weeks, but I ended up staying for 10 months.

What'd you do out there?

I didn't have any game plan. I just cruised around, hung out at the beach. I really wasn't interested in writing music or anything while I was there, but I kind of told myself that as soon as the songs started forming in my head, I'd come back. After 10 months, the dust started to settle, so I came home and started working on the new tracks.

"Debutante" seems like a logical progression from "Exit the Dragon" in that you seemed to write all the pop songs in Urge, and King wrote all the darker stuff.

I guess I was responsible for the poppier elements of Urge Overkill, and Eddie wrote more of the straightahead rock songs, the dirgier stuff, which I thought was a great blend. I've pretty much always had the same writing style, you know, the conventional pop songwriting — verse, chorus, bridge...all my favorite songs are like that. I think those kind of songs, the kind we grew up with, have become like a lost art form. It's the supply and demand thing. There's no demand for the classic, 3 and a half minute pop song, so no one's supplying them.

I heard there was an Urge Overkill one-off reunion gig recently. What? No.

Really? Because I also heard that you said there would never be an Urge reunion, so I was wondering what the deal was. Man, I've got to stop reading fucking websites.

Well, A, I never said that, and B, there was no reunion gig. We're not stupid, you know, we're aware that that's a card we have in our hands, but I think we all feel it's a bit premature, and that we should wait another five years and then really cash in. (laughs) Think of when Jerry and Dean embraced after 20 years on the telethon, it'll be more like that.

So you're still on good terms with the other guys?

Oh, yeh. I talked to Eddie a few days ago, and last time I played in LA, Blackie got up for an encore and sat in for a couple Urge standards. This one girl was crying

SLEAZEGRINDER

in the front row...I think people are under the impression that we don't speak or something.

So it wasn't even an ugly break up?

I'm sure it was at the time, but no uglier than that of any other band of guys that needed to take a break from not just each other, but the whole thing. We operated at such a fever pitch that we got burned out, and everybody needed time away from the band. It wasn't something that was even discussed, really, I mean, there was no knock-down, drag-out fight. It was just something that we all understood, and we all breathed a sigh of relief when it was over.

What's your relationship to Chicago like these days?

I don't really have one. It's a good, centrally-located place to operate a rock band, I mean I can get whatever I need day or night, but I don't really have any kind of relationship with this town.

Your local press used to try to bring Urge down all the time.

That's just a Chicago thing, really. They do that with everyone. Until you sell out arenas, then you're, like, the home team or something.

One of the defining moments of Urge history was when you met Neil Diamond on the hotel roof, and he gave you the classic showbiz advice, "The dogs may bark, but the



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carnival rolls on."

We met Neil Diamond on a roof?

Yeh, you were on a hotel roof in Las Vegas. Something about a helicopter.

(laughs) Yeh, well, he did give us the advice, but it was backstage at a show in Chicago. One of the other guys must have embellished the story.

You guys were way ahead of the curve on the Neil Diamond exploitation.

We were all just really big fans. I think people think it was just another Urge Overkill gag. Granted, Urge had a lot of gags, but that was never one of them. We truly were fans. As far as doing the Diamond cover, we liked that song, and we needed material. It's funny that it became the biggest thing that ever happened to the band.

Well, that song, and the whole Uma Thurman dancing around thing, is what everybody remembers about "Pulp Fiction".

It was just this shitty demo that we did four years earlier, and it was something of a fluke. It was just a fluke that Quentin was looking for the perfect song for this pivotal scene, and he finds that record in a used bin in England for like 50p...I always wanted to find the sap that thought we sucked and sold it to the record store.

You ever get to meet that supermodel you wrote that song about on "Debutante"?

Leticia Casta? No. I thought the whole Susan Lucci thing would work twice, but it didn't.

So, writing the Erica Kane song worked out for you?

Yeh, we got pretty tight with the cast of that show. I think they wrote us into the script once. Like, some kid was turning on the jukebox, and he said, "I want to hear that new Urge Overkill song."

But you never got to appear on the show?

No, but we told them if they ever needed extras, like guys sitting in the restaurant, that we'd be there. Me and Blackie were so hooked on that show. Little Sarah Michelle Gellar, she played Erica's daughter, she used to come to Urge shows, she was just this little thing...we loved her. We thought she was the best actress. We were quoted at the time as saying, "Keep your eyes on Sarah Michelle Gellar, she's going to be a big star."

I don't know, maybe it's just marketing or whatever, but I'm surprised the songs from "Debutante" aren't being played on the radio. They all sound like hits.

That's the mindset I have when ever I'm writing songs, I write as if they're going to be all over the radio. So if they sound like that, that's because they were designed to. It's too bad radio didn't figure that out (laughs).

What did you think of the way it was received?

It was on Loose Groove records, and just when the record came out they merged with this neighboring label that really only handles soundtrack records. They had no experience selling a record

like "Debutante". So I really don't blame them, their heart seemed to be in the right place. They wanted to do everything right, but they just had no experience doing it. Consequently, I don't think anyone even knew that this record was out. So it's not like it was received well or badly, it wasn't even really received. People are talking to me, going, "so, are you doing anything these days?" and I'm like, "well, yeh..." (laughs) I can't really get upset about it, because it's nobody's fault, really, but it's a shame because it's a good record.

How did you hook up with Loose Groove in the first place?

It's Stone Gossard's label, from Pearl Jam. He was a fan of Urge, and he said, "Listen, if you're doing anything on the side, I'd love to hear it," so I was sending him demos, and he was digging it, and after awhile there was like nine or ten of these songs, and he was like, "We gotta make this record." At first I was skeptical, I thought maybe I should hold off a little and shop around, but his staff over there were all excited about it...it was good to kind of come back up, not to get to the back of the line or anything, but to come up the way Urge did, cautiously come up through this independent route. I mean, that could be the kiss of death, to come up with this shiny new major label record, and then nobody buys it. Then I'd have been fucked. That's why it worked for us in Urge, because we built up our own base. The crowd came ready-made by the time we made the jump. But what I wasn't prepared for was Stone selling the label almost overnight. That kind of screwed things up a bit. But you gotta play the hand you're dealt.

How'd you find the players for "Debutante"?

Josh Freese, he was a friend, and he was always a big fan, he had all the demos for the songs, and he was like, "I'm playing on this record!" So he flew down, and he knocked it out in two days. Evans came on recommendation from some people in San Francisco, he was another one that got it in two days, just bam, bam, bam. And my guitar player at the time, Nils, I collaborated with him when I was putting it all together, he's kind of a riff meister. It was a cool experience. It was different, working with such pros. The thing with Urge was, we weren't the greatest musicians, but what we lacked in musicianship we made up for in personality. So it was a different experience, it was more of the Steely Dan approach.

You see any bands out there that have the Urge Overkill vibe to them?

Well, for a while, it seemed like every band was wearing suits, swigging martinis, and playing crushing power pop. Of course, we didn't exactly invent that. When we did that, it was punk rock to us, flying in the face of the underground, grunge or whatever. So that was our version of punk rock. There certainly wasn't anyone else wearing suits and playing pop songs at the time. Now it's become the norm, but I don't know if that's just the pendulum swinging back. We were always just going against the grain. So people say, "Hey, have you heard this band, they're totally chumping your style," but I figure, fuck 'em, it's all rock and roll, it's just "Johnny B. Goode", really.

Urge always played 'Big Time' rock and roll.

We always carried on as if we were huge, and then it became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

That was an excellent plan.

I'm just glad that it worked.

MILLIGRAM PHOTOS CATHERINE CARTER

So was it weird going back to playing smaller clubs on the solo tour?

The first tour was little weird, yeh. But on the second one, it was just a perfect fit, us opening for Cheap Trick. Their fans are a real rock and roll crowd, big arena-styled rock. So that was good, I felt like I was back in the saddle, where I belong. You can only slug it out in the clubs for so long. Although last Christmas, I was doing these acoustic shows...

Nash Kato unplugged. Righteous.

I did a couple in Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis, Ohio...it's was great just riding the rails to shows, it was so old school, that was the way they used to tour, the old jazzers, you know? It was just me and a six string. I never did that before, there was no bullshit, no crew. I was really surprised at how well they were received.

What tunes were you doing for those shows?

I did some stuff off of "Debutante", some of the more obscure Urge songs. At first I was real skeptical, like I don't do this, I'm a band guy, I'm not that good of a guitar player, how could it possibly be entertaining? But I ended up taking that "VH1 Storyteller" approach. Talking about how the songs came to be, and people love that shit, they eat it up.

Well, your lyrics usually tell stories anyway.

I didn't actually realize that until I started doing these acoustic shows. I didn't realize that I had been around long enough to be the old crusty guy on the stool, going "I wrote this one about this bar brawl I was in, in Tucson." (laughs)

You obviously like playing bigger shows.

Well, I feel like I graduated from playing the shitboxes. We did that in Urge, then we moved on to the bigger clubs, and by the end, y'know, we were doing shows with Pearl Jam, doing hockey stadiums, and it culminated in Brazil, with 70,000 people in the soccer stadium, so I worked my way up there. I know how to rock the big house. But it was kind of nostalgic to go back, I didn't really mind, it kept me humble.

How do you feel about playing old Urge songs live? Would you rather just play the new stuff?

I just put myself in the spot of being a fan, you know. If I went to see a guy because I liked his former band, of course I'd be interested in hearing the new stuff, but I'd also be going, "Please play this one song..." So I don't take it personally, they're fans, they get nostalgic. I don't think they expect me to be a jukebox either, but it's cool to drop one in now and then to keep everyone happy.

There's always a short list of guys that can bring back the rock. There's you, Josh Todd of Buck Cherry, Dave Wyndorf from Monster Magnet...

Dave Grohl from the Foo Fighters. He's all about the rock.

Yeh, and sooner or later it's gonna be your turn again. You'll have to save rock and roll.

It's all on my shoulders? Well, that's all right. Nash Kato's on the scene.

Go to www.nashkato.com to find out what happens next.

PEPPER SPRAYING THE METALLICA GUY

"I lost reality long ago, and now I live in a horror show"

- Hallow's Eve

I went to high school with this cat, Kyle. I never liked the motherfucker, to be honest, but his house was on the way, and his father's liquor cabinet was easily pried open. Every morning, before we left his house, he had this weird ritual where he would go through all the cabinets and drawers and take one or two pills out of any bottles he could find. Then he'd wash it all down with Sudafed. His mom wouldn't let him have any caffeine because he had ADD, and I think he figured popping all that shit would soothe his shaky mind. It never helped much, though. Kyle was

prone to sudden fits of violence. Instead of just hi-fiving you like everybody else, he'd come running up behind you and tackle you into the pavement. He'd get a glazed look in his eyes, and the next thing you know, he'd punch the math teacher in the face. Once he literally smashed his sister's head right through her bedroom door. Girls all said he was a little fucked. But hey, he had the whiskey.

After graduation, I went off to drop out of college, while Kyle stayed in the neighborhood to stare at the sun, or whatever. I didn't see him for years, and then, around five years later, I was visiting my mother when I ran into another high school

friend, Luke. "You seen Kyle lately?" he asked me. I told him I hadn't, and he said, "Well, there's something really wrong with him." "Of course there is," I said, "He's a fucking nutcase." "Yeh, well, he's a lot worse now. Anyway, he was asking about you, so I gave him your phone number." Son of a bitch. With friends like these...

About a month later, I get a call from Kyle. He sounds panicky. "I've got something really important to tell you. It's a matter of life and death. Meet me at the Store 24 in ten minutes." No, thanks. I hung up on him and went back to staring at the walls. He called me back about a week later. He didn't even remember calling me before. He launched into the weirdest, scariest monologue I've ever heard. "You brainwashed me with Metallica," he started. I figured he had to be putting me on, so I laughed. He wasn't putting me on. "This shit is serious. You were the one who played Metallica for me when we were 15. Now my

"I fell in love with James Hetfield, and then I married him. Now he lives in my closet, and won't leave me alone."

Yikes.

HIT SQUAD

life is ruined." Metallica ruined him? I figured the drugs would've done it. "I got obsessed with Metallica after that, I fell in love with James Hetfield, and then I married him. Now he lives in my closet, and won't leave me alone." Yikes. "I had to kill Lars Ulrich because they were suing me for \$200,000, but they replaced him with a clone." At this point in my life, I was a certified mental health counselor, so I was familiar with the convoluted ramblings of a paranoid schizophrenic. Still, it was pretty jarring hearing it from a cat I used to run with, even if he was a prick. He kept going with his terrible true tale, and I was planning on just hanging up on him again when he said, "...and that's why I'm going to fucking kill you." What? "Are you threatening me, man?" I asked him. "It's not a threat, it's a reality. I'm going to find you and stab you in the face. My family is under constant surveillance because of you. I figure, if you're dead, then they'll leave me alone. Watch your back". Click.

Listen, I'm all for a righteous knuckleduster, but I also know better than to take on a fucking lunatic. I started looking around for protection. All those months in rehab don't look good on a handgun application, so I ended up with a can of pepper spray. It was shaped like a big ball point pen, and I started carrying it around in my pocket. It became a bad obsession of mine. I started getting mouthier in any weather, looking for an opportunity to use it. I was dragging around this little fire-stick for two years, nerves frazzled, looking for a fight. I used to go over the inevitable confrontation in my head, waiting for the chance to put an end to this nightmare. Finally, last summer, I'm standing on the corner near my parents' house, when Kyle walks right by me. He's all disheveled, and a hundred pounds bloated, but it's the Metallica guy, all right. Crazily enough, I was pissed that he didn't even recognize me. I started chasing him down the street. I caught up to him, and grabbed his shoulder. "Hey, Kyle, it's me, Ken." He looked at me with vague recollection, but zero malice. "Oh, hi," he says. "Uh...what have you been up to?" "Listen, fuck all that," I say. I'm pissed. "What about all this Metallica shit? I thought you wanted to kill me?" "Oh." He's not even giving me any eye contact. "Listen, I was in the hospital for awhile, they gave me a lot of shock treatment. I don't remember a lot of stuff. I'm sorry if I was threatening you, or whatever. I wasn't doing too well before." And that was it, the end of the whole mess. Years of paranoia for nothing. So I sprayed him in the fucking eyes anyway.

CLAMS ON BRILLO: JIM THIRWELL ON THE FOETUS

The Musique Concrete of Jim Thirwell, and his many permutations of the Foetus name, is the music of God in a rotten mood, looking for souls to crush. Since his earliest incarnation in the late 70's as a snaggle-toothed New York art punk, lighting himself on fire to the tune of barking industrial tape loops, Thirwell has had a distinct vision of total sonic devastation. Like a booze-drenched mad scientist, Thirwell slowly perfected his studio craft, creating intricate, lusty epics filled with lippy anti-heroes in desperate scenarios that usually end in deep bruises or mushroom clouds. Albums like "Hole" and "Nail" snatched sounds from everywhere — metal, punk, blues, lounge, surf; any-

thing remotely satanic got blenderized in Thirwell's infernal machine and spat out like silver bullets, with deadly accuracy, and all of it was punctuated with the croaking bragadoccio of JGT himself, the Grand Poobah of industrial strength apocalypse rock. The last decade saw less Foetus albums and more Thirwell collaborations, as he became a superstar producer, remixing bands like Nine Inch Nails and the Cult into ferocious cyber frenzies. He recorded death ballads with long time girlfriend Lydia Lunch, tortured Torch with Marc Almond, forged the world's first rape metal band, Wiseblood, with the Swans' Rolli Mossiman, and brought the kitschy lounge music trend kicking and screaming into a dark and scary place with 'Steroid Maximus'. And he drank himself nearly to death while he was at it. But Thirwell called the funeral off at the last minute and cleaned up his filthy act. Fast forward, and the modern day Thirwell is back in the saddle, leaner and meaner, with a roster of no less than six new records due to hit the streets this year,



SOBER, STILL SINISTER: Jim Thirwell

and the first Foetus tour in years, always the definition of rolling thunder, tearing through the US this summer. I caught up with JGT on the verge of the release of the new Foetal pummel-job, "Flow", to see what makes this time bomb tick so loudly. Very rarely do I feel honored to talk to anybody. This was one of those few times...

"Flow" is the first new studio album in 6 years...

"Flow" stands up there with anything I've ever done. It's different, too. Since the last studio album, "Gash", there's been a lot of reissues and live albums, some of which should never have seen the light of day, all of which document the rise and fall of me. I've put out a lot of albums, but I consider the primary ones to be the four-letter Foetus records that are conceived as entities unto themselves, unlike compilations or side projects. So if you con-

SLEAZEGRINDER

domain.

It's just strange that you don't get mentioned very often by all these bands.

Well, I don't know where I fit in the pantheon of all this either. I don't survey the market place to hear what's out there, certainly not in the arena of music that you're talking about. Post-industrial rock is just not what I listen to.

But it's really just one riff, one minor meditation of yours, that's getting repeated endlessly.

I hate it when someone takes the dumb bit and runs with it.

I was surprised to hear you were spinning records as DJ Ofestu. That seems like the Foetus getting too close to the people.

You underestimate the power of the headphones as the great divider.

I just can't imagine people coming up to you and making requests...

No, I don't do requests. DJ Ofestu serves more as a backdrop for what's happening. It has nothing to do with the BPM turntable culture. The playlist doesn't usually even have anything on it made after 1975. Sometimes the whole set is crime/spy/cop show-oriented. I might go on little ethno-jaunts, heavy drum jaunts...

Do the same people that go to Foetus shows go to hear you spin records?

Well, most of the time, there's something else going on, and I'm

just adding flavor. In New York, something like DJ Ofestu is chopped liver, because there are so many other things going on. But I've done it out of town, and people have treated it like it was more of an event. Those would be the Foetus fans. People dig it when I DJ, it's very user-friendly. I'm not trying to drive everyone out of the club.

It's hard to pinpoint just who is going to be into the Foetus. Most rockers dig you because you're evil, but there are academic, collegiate types that like your music too...

Plus, it seems to cross age barriers a lot. There's a lot of younger kids that show up, which I think is great.

The early days of Foetus live was just you on stage with tape loops...

Just me, tapes, and a baseball bat.

sider that, than this is only album number 7. And when you consider that, right about the time of "Nail", "Thaw", and "Gash", the statements were increasingly striving for a kind of "listening music for when they drop the big one," music to kill yourself by, and your parents by. Well, you can only make that statement so many times. You can't keep going back and saying, "And another thing..." "Gash" was the penultimate statement for what I wanted to do with that. Where do you take it from there? Well, my life was being mirrored by those statements, and when you feel them creeping up on you, when you smell that death is singeing your nostrils, you either go through with that, or you take a step sideways.

Did quitting drinking have an effect on your creative process?

Absolutely. You know, if I didn't stop, I would have ended up dead. I don't think it's any secret that my reputation preceded me in that department, I was well known for my chemical intake. That kind of turnaround in life takes a lot of getting used to.

So, you obviously had to take a break and figure out what to do next...

I didn't have much of a choice. I wasn't even able to turn on the studio for some time. Some time life gets in the way, it serves up the things that you have to deal with that preclude putting out rock records.

Flaming pig's heads on sticks was definitely a statement of cultural dystopia 20 years ago, but it'd just be flash at this point. I wonder what your next "statement" is?

Well, the whole idea of "Flow", like the name, is a continuum, as opposed to a finality. It's a flow of ideas as well, it's a series of songs which made more sense to me after I completed them. I think all of my albums have been pretty stylistically diverse, very jarring in that way. "Flow" had a different feel. It's still intense. I think sonically, I'm moving in different directions, and musically...I don't know if the word to use is sophistication, but it's got a different edge to it.

Every time I turn on the radio I hear all these bands that were obviously influenced by your music and don't even know it...

Or influenced by someone else's band that was inspired by Foetus.

Right. Marilyn Manson, Nine Inch Nails...

It's funny. I don't know how true that is. I don't see the direct link, I'm not sure what elements people are talking about. But I get told that often enough, so I guess it must be true. You put your statement out there, and after awhile it becomes public



HE WEARS HIS SUNGLASSES AT NIGHT: More Foetus

HIT SQUAD

But that wasn't because of lack of players, it was because you wanted to stick with a singular vision.

Along the way, I've always had these ideas of purity that stood in my way, really. I should have just put a band together back then, but I had this stupid youthful idealism that of course just gets squashed like a bug, like a defenseless dandelion. (laughs)

Well, the nature of things is that as soon as somebody else shows up, the vision begins to change.

Right. I didn't think I could capture that immensity of sound, and at the time, around 1984, sampling technology wasn't accessible enough to take on the road, at least not at the level I was on. That came later. Most of the songs were created as a studio beast anyway, so it took a lot of reinterpretation to perform them with people in any given live permutation of Foetus.

The earlier days were almost like solo acoustic Thirwell.

I felt a bit like I was cheating with tapes, but it came down to how well one person could command a stage. Nowadays, everybody does it. Only with dancers.

How do you decide who's going to be in the live band?

Personal hygiene, whether I can stand sitting in the van with them, the aesthetic...most of the people that play in the live band have other commitments, so it's like a revolving door of players. We've already done a few US dates last year, which were warm-ups to playing a big show at the Royal Festival Hall in London, so I'm going to pop my cherry there. We're touring the US in June, then Europe in late August/september.

Can we expect a big, scary noise to be coming off the stage?

I think it's big, yeh. Scary? I don't know, scary is in the eye of the beholder. Scary to some is seductive to others.

Whatever happened to the ill-fated "Foetus on the Beach" project?

That ended up stillborn. What happened was, that was conceived quite a long time ago, and "Mad Max 2" came out, and that was the whole fucking story. Except it was going to be a musical. Otherwise it was going to be just like that. That movie blew it for me.

There's never been a Foetus ballad.

Sure there has, I have plenty. The Wiseblood song, "Someone Drowned in My Pool" — that's a full-on ballad.

Pretty fucking evil for a ballad.

No, it's not. Well, maybe a little.

"She started to bleed, so I had to get rid of her?"

Hey, I just call them like I see them.

You also have a new project called "Manorexia"...

For sometime I've been wanting to do an ambient album and sell it exclusively through the website. It was actually on Thanksgiving of last year, stuff just started popping out, and I couldn't stop. It's not an ambient album, really. It's actually 14 separate movements that cross fade into each other. It's got a spatial quality that may have been missing on some of my other projects. It leaves the brain to fill in the holes, to listen to and devour each sound...it's like drugs without the drugs. I think it came about from being so deeply engaged in the business side of things, to the preclusion of creating. I think that happens a lot to people in my position, you get so caught up in the hustle of the business, that there's no time to create any more. This thing had been welling up in me, "Manorexia" is the musical pustule that I had to burst.

And then there's Steroid Maximus. At the time that first record came out, there was a surge of interest in lounge/exotica music, and Steroid Maximus took that in a completely different direction...

I hate to say it about myself, but the first Steroid Maximus album was a little bit ahead of its time, not only for the exotica sound and the cover's tribal cat holding a martini, but with it being all instrumental music. I mean, years later there are all these people

buying instrumental music, and it's like, where the fuck were you when that album came out?

People seem to like that record a lot more now than when it first came out.

Yeh. Well, it'd be nice if people could find the fucking thing. You seem to have to look really hard to find it. But soon I'll be launching the Foetus Shoppe on my website, www.foetus.org, and you'll be able to get a lot of the back catalog straight from there, as well as out of print 7-inchers, T-shirts...

I love the "Ask JGT" section of your website.

There aren't any definitive answers to a lot of those questions. I like to leave some threads dangling. That's the thing about answering any question, in print or even on the internet, they then follow you around for the rest of your life. "Well, you said in this interview you did in '88 that you like vanilla ice cream..." I mean, for fuck's sake. (laughs)

Well, most of the questions seem to be about your lyrics. Is there really that much of a specific, methodical theme to them? Because I always thought that you were constantly taking different facets of culture and putting them into a loose theme for each record...

There is a specific message in them, but I don't stick to any one formula, or why I'm doing it, or what the fuck I'm talking about. Or whether it's third person, or I'm talking through a character, or through me. There's a series of masks to unravel, or not, and sometimes that leaves me wide open for misinterpretations...

Wild speculation...

And it gives me a lot of armor too. Maybe I'll be able to strip it

down as I get more mature, but I don't see that happening tomorrow.

But on the whole, I think you're one of the more literary-minded lyricists in the rock world... Really?

Yeh, along with Andrew Eldritch.

The Sisters of Mercy guy? I'm not really familiar with his work.

He's the kind of guy that name drops Marx and Engels in a rock song. Seems like that's something you would do.

I'm more likely to talk about Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen in a song.

In all your sonic experimentation, has there been any back masking we should know about?

Oh, there's been back masking, but none that you should know about. You'll have to work that out yourself.

I guess that you'd know if it actually worked, then.

Well, who knows what's nestled on page 93 of the *New York Times*?

MOTOR SLEAZE ÜBER ALLES

Buckcherry — "Time Bomb" (Dreamworks)

This record is better than teenage pussy. It's better than a tricked-out Camaro that runs on methedrine and boilermakers. It's nearly better than *Van Halen II*, for God's sake.. Everybody, from the most blunder-witted, mullet-cursed strip mall champion munching on Cheetos in the den and watching VH1's "Rockshow", to the snarliest of urban hep-cats, clocking in at the ultraswank Coke bar, biding his time so he can go home and watch the same show, will undoubtedly want in on the explosive rock action of "Time Bomb" and its cadre of fist-fighting, high voltage, sleaze metal anthems. The leering nods to Guns n'Roses and Aerosmith's hungry years are splattered all over the dashboard, but it's the primal ferocity of Buckcherry's Gonzo speedball rock, the mammoth production, and the blunt-force prowess of Josh Todd's lyrics ("Life ain't nothing but bitches and money", "I'm a big dick motherfucking porno star") that get the blood pumping. Americans are obsessed with two things — scoring (money, chicks, drugs, whatever), and cheating death. Buckcherry do both on a daily basis, to no ill-effect, and therein lies the global appeal, the gold records, the champagne bubble baths with wired supermodels, and the inevitable backlash from snarky hipsters. But fuck them, anyway. Everybody wants to grow up to be David Lee Roth. Josh Todd actually managed to pull it off. Time to join the party, citizen. You ain't gonna be young forever.

Milligram — "The Hello Motherfucker Companion" (Tortuga)

Listening to a Milligram record is so much like smoking crack they should come wrapped in tinfoil with a fanged Jesus stamp. The overall effect is the same — your brain explodes in a flurry

SLEAZEGRINDER

of panicked bliss for a minute or so, and you are left salivating for another hit. Last year's debut, "Hello Motherfucker", quickly established Milligram as one of the most tightly wound, hammer-fisted rock bands this town has ever seen, with a densely packed cadre of sinew rockers machine gunning at triple speed, a lifetime of screaming anxiety pressed into 15 short minutes. This companion CD collects the rest of that fateful recording session, a trio of songs deemed too slow for the first onslaught, and a 5 pack of punk covers ripped out with more confidence and eerie precision than the punchy alcoholics that wrote them. "My Own Private Altamont", the CD's opener, is a stunning, fucked-blind 7-minute epic of volcanic stoner riffage and the wailing of a legless giant falling off the edge of the world. This is the song that has made Milligram's name in the stoner rock circles, and it's a total fucking blowout. "Not OK", another live favorite nailed down cold, continues the steaming drag and lurch, and by the time the last strains of the Black Flag and Fear covers blur by, you'll be selling your stereo to score the upcoming full-length. Highly addictive rock.

Sourvein — s/t (Game Two)

"Sourvein" reminds me of that movie, "Tetsuo-the Iron Man", where the Japanese guy wakes up to find a bunch of wires poking out of his cheek. He goes to the doctor who tells him, "Yes, you have a piece of metal stuck in your brain. It seems to have been artistically placed there." Later that afternoon, he's covered in chunks of iron and wads of steel wool. He frantically calls his mother, and the phone welds itself to his face. Then he goes on a Godzilla-style rampage and wrecks the city. This record is just like that, only they could call it, "Sourvein — the Broken Bottles and Duct Tape Man". A rock 'n'roll nightmare, in other words. Fitful stabs at dirty southern metal groove are quickly swallowed up in a wash of Whiskey be-fouled sludgecore, augmented by the incessant barking of an asthmatic two-headed dog in a junkyard of despair and empty promises. Sourvein remind me of self-mutilating dope ghouls Buzzoven having a worse day than usual, which is saying a lot. Tie up and drop dead, because this is one unforgettable alcohol withdrawal opera for the dreadlocks-by-accident crowd. Jesus, my ears feel crusty.

Operator Generator — "Polar Fleet" (Man's Ruin)

Anyone who's had the singular displeasure of nodding off through a set by Jersey's slacker kings of loser-groove Core, with their bell-bottoms, Hemp tunics, and jazzy, free form explorations, knows that the overdriven biker rumble of stoner rock sometimes takes a downward spiral into navel-gazing hippy junk. Well, it's with thunderous applause that I present to you Operator Generator, a band who swings so far to the other side of the barbed wire fence that their record label compares them to horse galloping, leather chest-plated "nuclear metal" freaks like Voivod and Celtic Frost. Of course, it goes without saying that the geniuses at Man's Ruin are on drugs; there's no pictures of the band in sweat pants and baseball caps, and the High On Fire/Sea Of Green bombastic stoner-shred that rolls slow and

HIT SQUAD

heavy through "Polar Fleet"'s grooves is sure to elicit more slurring "Right on, Maannn's" than fists in the air. But if it's heavy fucking metal you want, there's a literal geyser of molten riffs exploding out of this record, vocals that soar as high and free as those of Halford, or at least Lips from Anvil, and enough rollicking hooks to keep Pinhead in re-decorating ideas for weeks. OG sound like Thin Lizzy running from the law in bandaged feet, and that's a righteous noise indeed. Lines like "The challenge of frost is now brave," however, are going to need some serious explaining.

Black Helicopter — "Jesus is Torturing Me"

I was reasonably sure these cats had sent me a letter bomb, so I got my girlfriend to open the package. But instead of having to scrape my loved one's brains off of the wall, I got a bottle of piss and a righteous slice of dead Elvis chaingang slither. CIA foil and erstwhile vocalist Tim Shea comes off like a surly lounge singer with a bad case of the shakes who's more than a little uncomfortable with the creepy back-up band slogging and trolling behind him. Banging away like a redneck Big Black, or like Cop Shoot Cop without all that NYC junkie-terrorist jive, the 'Copter have an air of sneering menace to their sound, like some big weird fucker in a bar that keeps threatening to beat the shit out of you without ever delivering. Black Helicopter lay down the Bad Wisdom with swarthy cheek, twisted dissonance, and a neo-tribal pounding that might be Morse code or psychosexual hypnotic suggestion. All I can really say is that BH's

throbbing, car-jacking, concrete blues knows some big ugly secret that it ain't telling. But I'd guess it involved fucking Lydia Lunch at some point. (www.blackhelicopter.com)

The Humanoids — "Dirty Moves"

A five pack of emaciated post-atomic punks slink into the studio, all rotting flesh, egg yolk eyeballs, and ancient leather. Green teeth spit out of dry mouths and clink onto the floor. Brittle bones audibly creak and splinter. Whatever's going on here, God don't like it. These rock hard space ghouls, dazed and confused but with some primal hive mind focus, gradually pick up their instruments, plug them in, and punch the amps on. To 11, at least. Suddenly, the room explodes in a fuck frenzy of heaving, motor-burning sleaze crunch from beyond the grave. Coming down heavy, like Kiss's pop thrills smacking headlong into the ramshackle ferocity of the Backyard Babies or Hardcore Superstar, the Humanoids are the hardest rocking group of flesh-eating corpses I have ever heard.. And I've seen legions. (www.thehumanoids.com)

SLEAZEGRINDER TOP 5

- 1) Iron Boss — "Rides Again"
- 2) Scratching Post — "This Time It's Personal"
- 3) Devil's County Death Cult — "American Heavy"
- 4) The Malakas — "Too Good To Be True"
- 5) Swampass — "No Means Go"

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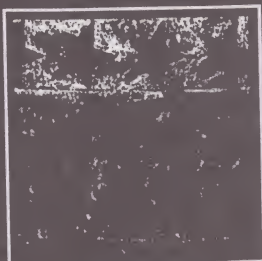


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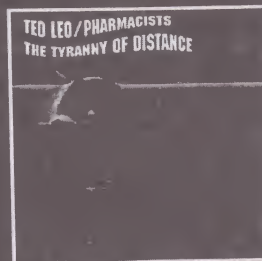
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WHY NAPSTER DESERVED TO LOSE

Wrote my friend Ed Lin: "I remember that 1993 interview you did with Dave Thomas (not of Wendy's fame, but of Pere Ubu), mentioned in two of your editorials in *Hit List*, where he said the industry would eliminate music media in order to control the distribution. When downloadable music appeared, it seemed to fulfill Thomas' prophecy, but things like Napster brought control back to the people, and even the artists, to some degree. There's a lot of out-of-print punk vinyl that mp3s have given new life!"

While conceding these facts, I'm actually no fan of allowing everyone to download music from complete strangers for

for the costs of marketing and pressing, taken out of a ridiculously puny royalty rate). As a U.S. senator commented recently, "It's like paying back your mortgage yet the bank still owns your house."

Finally, as Mr. Lin notes, mass file-sharing has led to the availability of a lot of obscure material. Better to hear the stuff than have no access to it, decade after decade. This surely leads to deeper appreciation and enthusiasm for music, much as a metropolitan area with a lot of great radio stations tends to inspire a bigger, better music scene than towns with just a few lousy ones.

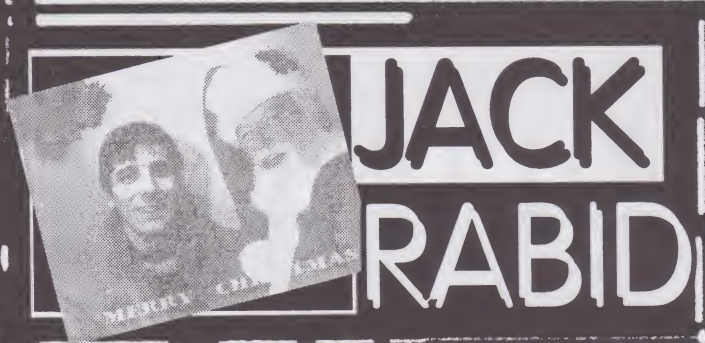
Nevertheless, I don't think all this justifies free file-sharing. First off, I just don't believe that people appreciate what they get for free as much as when they pay even a token amount for it. (For example, when we started charging a mere 25¢ for my own magazine *Big Takeover* in 1982, some "readers" stopped taking multiple free copies with all good intentions and then throwing them out weeks later unread, though the content hadn't changed!). Secondly, as a recording artist myself, I think that the artists who are footing the bill (either directly out of their meager bank accounts, or via these record company "advances") must be paid back somehow for their costs, let alone for the value of their work which fans are consuming. Now, to the extent that file-sharing leads to *sales* an artist would otherwise not have garnered, it is a good thing. That is in fact what home taping has done for years, and what happened with Napster in 2000.

But file-sharing is not precisely the same as home taping. Had Napster won the lawsuit instead of losing it, the question for the future would have been whether those who have already downloaded and burned a CD of an LP this way will still want to buy...a CD of an LP! True, so far they have, and we must bow to these numbers. The lure of legit ownership of a CD product, with its approved art, has not been demolished by free downloads - at least so far. But as the process becomes more streamlined, that might change. New generations may have no ingrained tradition of walking into record stores and buying prerecorded CDs, and may not have that penchant for the official CD. *That* is the prospect that has been shaking the knees of every major label big cheese behind that lawsuit.

Secondly, and most importantly, the big bad wolf record companies had an unshakably valid point that the judge, the appeals court, and we ourselves cannot ignore! (No matter what personal feelings we might have about the labels themselves.) Their wares are

copyrighted. Period, endstop. The fact that major labels perpetually exploit the artists they enter into freely-signed contracts with does not change that fact. Two wrongs don't make a right.

So let's get one thing straight: No one ever held a gun to the head of Courtney Love and made her or her late husband - sorry about the gun reference in his case, but it's just the right phrase - sign to Geffen (DGC) Records. Why didn't Love and Kurt Cobain stay with their former labels, Caroline Records and Sub Pop, respectively, two fine labels as indies go? It was because



free. This is not a popular view, so let me explain.

I understand the main points in favor: With the narrow, stultifying playlists offered by contemporary radio stations (owned and controlled by a handful of corporate outlets), internet file-sharing has allowed a 10,000-fold increase in music the public can check out without blowing \$20 - thus actually *helping* the major labels. It's also helped to promote *all* their artists, not just the one percent they spend so much money to promote, while simultaneously aiding in the uphill battle against majors' predatory dominance. This is why, despite millions and millions of free downloads, sales in the industry...went *up* seven percent for the year 2000! The major labels look like a bunch of chicken littles who have reacted to Napster with the same alarmism they did 20 years ago when they tried to tell us that "home taping is killing music." Right! Tell us another fable!

And as for the artists not getting paid for all these downloads, well, those like Courtney Love who claim that major labels have been giving the artists a mere exploitative pittance of the billions they generate are also correct. An LP that sells 150,000 copies and makes a million dollar profit for a record company often leaves the artist in debt to the label (after the artist is charged

As a recording artist myself, I think that the artists who are footing the bill must be paid back somehow for their costs, let alone for the value of their work.

both were frustrated after selling less than 10,000 copies of their debut LPs, *Pretty on the Inside* and *Bleach*, as are thousands of other indie artists! (Cobain was particularly frustrated at how difficult it was to find the first Nirvana LP in record stores he visited on the band's tour to support it, a common lament of many an indie-label artist.) So both reasoned that with better distribution and promotion, they could sell many times that. Cobain and Love were among the few who were right about that (most indie bands just fail miserably, even with major label backing), but in order to get these benefits they were willing to sign contracts that specified in recognizable print, fully explained by their music-contract lawyers, that they'd be so exploited by these labels if they were in fact successful.

It's not that we think Love is wrong when she calls her contract unfair. Clearly, by any decent standard, it is, as are so many contracts for the unproven in the entertainment industry. But she can't suddenly take on the role of economic victim without admitting that she and her late husband knowingly made deals with this devil. Faust was not the only one who got reticent when Beelzebub decided it was time to collect his debt.

While Love and others should continue agitating for fairer record contracts, let's face it: as long as so many people sadly aspire to be famous, ass-kissed rock stars at any cost, and end up acceding to this royal label-screwing for that mere possibility, then those who actually do make it themselves are complicit in their own exploitation. With every new star the label signs cheap and happily screws thereafter, the incentive is lessened for the label to give the talent a bigger share of the pie. If major artists formed a union and collectively bargained, as in other creative industries, they might erase this century of corporate music

JACKRABID

abuse. Another route is that of Fugazi and Ani DiFranco, who put out their own successful records and thumb their noses at the myriad million-dollar-advance offers thrown at them each year by giant companies. This proves there is zero truth to the idea that major labels are the only game in town. Such savvy, dedicated, and confident artists know that these multinational labels are taking a risk on hundreds of artists who are unproven commodities, and that the bad terms offered them reflect that poor risk, in the same way that junk bonds pay a higher rate of interest.

Thus, we can't just ignore the rights of the owners of content, even those who pay the original creators a flimsy royalty rate. Copyright is not an antiquated concept in the face of the internet explosion! Even when the radio plays a song (most people's idea of free music up to now), the stations are duty-bound to pay the artist a royalty for that privilege. And in return for the free music, listeners are forced to lend their ears to the station's advertisers or public service announcements.

OK, you might say, why do I wink at home taping, but draw the line at unlimited file-sharing? I believe there are important distinctions. First of all, taping an LP is usually a friendly exchange between people who know each other (plus there's the cost of the tape and the time spent making it, so one tends to do it sparingly, only to turn someone else on to the music), whereas file-sharing is impersonal swapping on a mass, exponential scale between total strangers. This is tantamount to casual, mass, free music distribution, against the wishes or rights of the producer -

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a rather *big* distinction in my mind.

Let me be extremely clear about why that difference is so important. If, as a publisher, I feel that I control the content of this magazine, and that those reading it do not have an unlimited right to transfer its entire contents to a potentially infinite, exponentially-increasing number of people who they don't even know without my consent, how can I endorse this very practice with music songs and LPs?

Just recently, I had to ask a website to take down my *Big Takeover* #47 Radiohead cover feature that they'd typed up and posted without my knowledge. Needless to say, I was none too pleased by this development, considering all the 60-hour work weeks that my staff and contributors pour into making an issue...How then can I expect fans of a group to buy an issue if they've already read the entire 10-page feature? I would have been just as unhappy if, Napster-style, a reader had typed up and posted the article on some file-sharing site for boundless others to share, download, and read without having to buy my magazine. (Without rancor, I asked the Radiohead site to cut it down to only a sample, around one-third of the article, and to let those reading it know that the rest of the piece was in our mag. We allow many websites to do this, if they ask for and secure my permission. But even here, they must ask first!)

The point is, *that text belongs to me*, as publisher of *The Big Takeover*, just as the text you are reading throughout this magazine belongs to Jeff Bale, *and there is a reason for it.* Would it be any different if you wanted to post the entire contents of a book or short story on your site, without the author or publisher's permission? Who, exactly, owns the right to mass-produce and distribute a work, if not its creator and/or those he or she knowingly enters into formal agreements with?

For what it's worth, I believe, without reservation, that artists and their publishers/labels/studios are owners of their writing/recording/art/movies, and we do not possess some kind of unfettered "democratic" right to mass distribute them for free merely because file-technology has made it practicable. Whether we like it or not, the labels had every right to sue Napster, and should have sued them! Hell, even Metallica had every right, if they liked, to object so vehemently and publicly to folks downloading their music gratis, and the Offspring had the right to say they *didn't* object to their music being shared via Napster, if they can convince their label to accede to it. The point is, it's the artist/owner/producer/label who should decide what they want to give away for nothing - and what they do not!

That said, Thomas was clairvoyant: distribution of music on the internet is here to stay. It's merely in its infancy. And the real question ultimately won't be whether music is downloaded or not, but how, for how much, and who will control it. (As I said a few *Hit List* issues ago, there are already observable costs to the net's music offerings, as so many wonderful record stores have so far been put out of business. It will get worse! Recently I was dismayed to hear of the closing of that Minneapolis two-decade institution/treasure trove Garage D'Or. Another great store the

internet murdered!)

What I think should happen is this: music consumers should be allowed to hear samples of songs (not the whole thing, unless the artist/label wants to designate a few LP tracks as singles, like a song on the radio). If consumers like what they hear, they should be allowed to download singles or full LPs for a fee charged to their credit card, at perhaps as much as 60% less than the price they'd pay in a CD store (due to the elimination of CD pressing and shipping charges). Each label or artist should offer this material on their own site or on other authorized sites, such as CD stores. And labels and artists should be free to set whatever price they like, or even to give them away free if they so desire.

This way everyone would be happy. The artists and labels would control their work and be paid for it, while consumers would retain this increased access, and start buying items for infinitely cheaper prices. It's utopian, of course, and you can bet your bottom dollar the labels will struggle to keep our hands off their golden egg-laying goose. And more to the point, until the technology is developed to keep one person who buys an LP from illegitimately spreading the music to millions, the labels can't take that step.

Yet it is likely inevitable. Techies will ultimately find an encryption/encoding device to keep unfettered replication from occurring. File-sharing of most copyrighted or unofficial material will become the future equivalent of bootlegging, whether winked at or aggressively prosecuted and curtailed. And this is

all infinitely preferable to a world in which we all have some kind of "right" to get something someone else created, on demand, for free, and without their consent!

Perhaps it is rhetoric to claim that mass file-sharing without permission is "stealing," as the industry said in their suit

and PR releases, but then again, just *how* different is it, really? How different from stealing is any kind of file-sharing of creative or informative content made by someone who wishes to sell it and has no desire to give it away for nothing? *Why are these people's wishes and rights so readily discardable?* What gives us the right to acquire anyone else's work for free if they don't want to give it to us for free?

Those of you lamenting Napster's court loss - and I've heard some pretty damn indignant folks in the music community on this issue - must ask yourselves these troubling questions. We all liked getting the music for free, sure, but what real "right" did we have to do that? If you think you were/are entitled to everything for nothing, there is no book, movie, article, painting, story, review, etc., that you don't also possess a similar "right" to download and upload for free, bypassing the consent or control of those who made it and certifiably own it. In fact, given its greater importance, you have a much bigger "right" to free food, clothing, shelter, and medicine. Yet last time I checked, most people reading this paid *handsomely* for all four of those things regularly!

This is not "democracy." It's just lunacy with no basis in real life as any of us actually live it. ☙

To check out Jack's magazine 20-year-old magazine, *The Big Takeover*, have a look at the web site at www.bigtakeover.com. Sample issues are only \$5 and subscriptions are only \$20 for four issues.)

HAVING A CAREER IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS IS LIKE SLAMMING MY BALLS IN THE CAR DOOR! A TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE PUNK ROCK'N'ROLL BUSINESS

[Note: Some names have been changed and some characters are composites. Am I talking about you? Probably. Don't sweat it, no one will ever know! It's called HUMOR. As Axl Rose once croaked, "Take It For What It Is."]

Saturday, October 5th: I wake up bleary-eyed and still smelling of rancid cigarette smoke from the show in Baltimore the night before. My guitarist and bassplayer are both asleep in the big hotel room bed as I pull myself off the floor. Where are we? Oh yeah, Lancaster, PA. I look at my two sleeping male bandmates on the bed and almost collapse in hilarity. Both of them are bleached blond and half-naked, their arms and legs sticking out akimbo from underneath the covers, looking like bronze adonises after a hot night of gay sex. Of course, neither of them are gay. But I snap a quick photo anyway, making a mental note to send copies of the pics to their mothers and girlfriends.

My drummer is sitting in the corner chair in a cloud of cigarette smoke. His black jeans are covered in questionable stains, and his eyes are ringed with clumpy eyeliner from the show last night. He's been watching TV all night because he is not allowed to sleep while the rest of us do. The reason for this is his high-decibel snoring, cursing, farting, and smoking (yes, he smokes in his sleep - he just sits up in bed, lights a cig, and goes back to sleep).

After everyone wakes up we head to Denny's, where the waitress asks us if we are the Goo Goo Dolls. "Can I have an autograph for mah daughter?", the waitress says, a large piece of broccoli stuck between her teeth. "She loves it. She really loves it. The rock music, or the rap, or whatever you guys play. Y'all are the Goo Goo Dolls, right?" We sign the autographs but can only remember the name of ONE of the Goo Goo Dolls. Plus there's four of us, so my guitarist signs his name "Johnny Rzeznik" and the rest of us just scribble and draw rude things on the napkin we were asked to sign. The waitress sticks the napkin in her apron and slouches off. We discuss not tipping her for a full twenty minutes.

We show up at the club an hour early and begin talking to some of the kids outside. "Is it true that you guys and Libertine are both gay homocore bands?", one mohawked future farmer of America asks. "Yes", I say seductively, and pinch my nipples through my shirt. The kid walks off, never to return. Another, trash rock looking kid walks up to me and says "Your lyrics changed my life." "Yes", I say seductively, pinching my nipples through my shirt again. This Time, the kid winks at me. Time to call my girlfriend. I wrestle the cell phone away from my bassist and make the call.

The local hipsters are out in full force tonight, as we're opening for the beloved Carcasses, a Mohawked crusty punk band who sing in a Suave Spanish accent. They are pricks. Two merch tables were not enough for them, so they knock our stuff off of a third table and set up extra stuff. Their dedication to the Punk Unity they sing about is awesome. The bassist is sporting a dirty leather jacket and a badly-dyed mohawk, but he's wearing an expensive Rolex watch. Punk Rock, up the system! Or, down the system, or something. It's

all Mandarin Chinese to me. I'm more Paul Westerberg than Wattie, which is probably why these kids hate our guts. We play a pretty good set, but break at least three strings, as we always do. We didn't bring any extra strings either, like always. Also par for the course is that heartwarming moment when we ask to borrow a string, and all the other bands turn their heads and suddenly pretend they weren't paying attention. I love Punk Rock. But the kids get into it this time. Our crowd - all 40 of them - squeeze in up front and yell along to the songs, while the Carcasses crowd - all 140 of them - just stands there and watches, bewildered. When the set is over,



a kid wearing one of our T-shirts complains loudly that we didn't play long enough. I grab the lapels of his leather jacket, and say, "Baby, eight songs is the longest set we'll ever play, that's a rule". "But you have to give the kids what they want!!!" He screams. "Fuck the kids!", someone in my band shouts with glee. "That's no way to sell records", a member of the opening band says in disgust. We make a mental note of that. But we don't play any more.

On the way out of the packed club, someone steps on my guitarists' vintage Les Paul Junior and smashes the neck of the guitar, rendering it useless. My guitarist screams loudly that he will sodomize the person who did this, but nobody fesses up. We are told we actually got a better crowd reaction than the Carcasses did, so we get paid more. They get their guarantee, but they want more, and they're pissed. The one with the Rolex on calls us rockstar pricks. He says we wear more make-up than his girlfriend, and that our interview in *Hit List* was pure bullshit. I reply, "You're The Tops, baby", smile, and comb my greased-back hair. We sneak out while the liberty Spikes argue with the Mohawks, our pockets loaded with tens and twenties. We giggle and skip through the parking lot like schoolgirls.

On the way out of Lancaster we are chased by a crowd of Amish people who are offended that my guitarist had yelled rude comments at the Amish girls working in the field we'd just passed. "Show me your pussy!" He squealed with delight, "Show me your pussy!" The Amish are on horseback and we are in a Jeep Cherokee, so we outrun them easily. I look in the rearview mirror and see ten guys dressed like Abe Lincoln giving us the finger. I giggle hysterically for twenty minutes. My guitarist requests that we put the Black Halos on the CD player (again), then falls asleep in the back seat, drooling on his Dead Boys shirt.

Tuesday October 8th: I'm on the phone for an hour with the guitarist of successful punk band New Wave Frankenhooker, who is putting together a huge compilation of punk'n'roll bands. Everyone who is anyone in the scene will be included. I asked him if we could get on. "To be honest with you," he wheezes, "No one in the know likes you guys. You guys have an attitude prob-

HIT SQUAD

lem. You think you're hot shit. You've gotten a lot of press, but who cares? You don't hang out after shows, and you don't make nice with the people who can pull strings for you. I think I would be sending the wrong message by putting you on the comp. Besides, you're too wimpy and British-sounding, the kids want to hear HARD punk music!" He drones on about the "corporate anti rock conspiracy," as I begin to fall asleep. Eventually he says he has to go practice Karate, and I leave him to it.

I put on a video of Gene Vincent on the "Town Hall Party" show while I start to make booking calls. "You've been blacklisted again", says Sheila at The Little Feast in Cambridge. The Sticky Pins read your letter to the editor in *Flipside* calling them a bunch of Nazi thugs, and they don't like you so I don't either. They're POPULAR. You should try to be more POPULAR, like the Sticky Pins. They also said they were going to kill you and carve a swastika in your forehead for calling them Nazis. You should just PLAY ALONG and be afraid of confrontation, like everyone else." I hang up and try the Champagne Rollercoaster in NYC. The phone rings 357 times, and then someone picks up and says, "Who do you KNOW?" "Huh?", I ask. "Who do you KNOW? Are you stupid? Are you from Arkansas? You have to KNOW someone to get booked here! Do you know the L.E.S. Stitches? Do you know the Toilet Boys? If not, fuck you!!!" And with that, the phone goes dead in my ear. Fabulous. Then I call F.F. The Frogs' Club, right here in town. The booking agent I'm used to talking to there has been fired. I try to talk to the new booker. I tell her that we've played there before with the Candy Snatchers and Nashville Pussy and drawn a decent crowd on our own, that we've been interviewed in several national mags, that our label was happy with our record sales, and that we always draw when we play out of town.

"Sounds great," the Booking Agent says. "What band are you again?" I repeat our band name. "Uhhh," she says, "I'm going to have to call you back." She never does. I go to the mailbox and there are three letters from kids in different parts of the country, all asking me why we don't play out more.

Wednesday, October 9th: Rehearsal. We try to block out the din of alterna-rock being played by the band next door as we work on songs. There is a mirror in the rehearsal room, and as we play my guitarist is mesmerized by his own reflection, so he ignores us and barely tries to play the song as he poses and twirls, his eyes never leaving the mirror. After the rehearsal, even though I'd told everyone it was Rent Day for the space, no one has any money. I decide we'll pay next time. I look forward to the angry phonecall from the landlord. On the way home the drummer confesses that he hates the guitarist. When I get home and check my emails, I get a long diatribe from the bassist on how much he hates the drummer, and another email from the guitarist in which he confesses he really doesn't like me much. I am thrilled.

Thursday, Oct. 10th: I go out after work to pick up all the punk mags to see if our new album was reviewed. I smell like raw meat from 8 hours of supermarket labor, but I don't give a rats' ass. I need to read something good about this band, and soon. Sure enough, all the mags have a review. Two mags misspell our name, but liked the record. One mag calls us teenage wannabes, although we're actually all in our twenties and thirties. They make enough blanket generalizations to let me know they never actually listened to the record. Yet another mag says that we sound like the Clash - if they had no arms or legs and their genitals were on fire. I buy that one so I can send it to my Mom. The final mag says we're the second coming of the Replacements, my lyrics are godlike, and the

guitars are like Johnny Thunders on pure speed. We've also made the playlists of every reviewer on staff. I look at that one awhile, decide it's all a cruel trick, and leave the store. When I get home the phone rings and it's my drummer. He says he's read all the reviews and is going to kill himself. He's prepared to join GG in Hell. I can hear a Leif Garret CD playing in the background. I talk my intrepid drummer out of suicide just like he's done for me, many times. At the end of the conversation, we're both laughing and making fun of the new Drunken McMurphys single.

As I pour some Rum in my Coke at Twelve Noon the next morning, I go online to look at the Message Board on our website. It's mostly kids fighting with each other, and other kids who post anonymously to tell us we suck. One guy posts every day, making repeated personal insults and begging us to break up. He hints that he knows other bands in the scene, bands we think are our friends who constantly laugh at us and call us posers. He's obviously just some computer geek who has no life outside the Internet, but it makes me wonder why I do this. We hadn't lucked out and made it big fast like a lot of bands. We'd fucked up, made enemies, lost time, lost momentum. We always sucked when the gig was important, and we were always great when hardly anyone showed up. We weren't any good at schmoozing or making influential friends. We were often depressed and whiny, and we often didn't play very well. Our records sold OK, a couple thousand people bought each one, and the reviews were usually pretty good. But we didn't get that instant hipster acceptance that some other bands got. We had no money, and constantly got kicked out of rehearsal spaces. It was sometimes difficult finding places that would let us even play. In our six year history, my drummer and I had gone through seven guitarists, five drummers, and four bassists. I couldn't even remember all their names. We sometimes had feuds with other bands we saw as smooth-talking, big budget fakes. There were a lot of strikes against us. We were sort of broken people, all of us, in a way. We didn't work right, we didn't fit. While we were definitely friendly, good-hearted people who loved rock'n'roll, we didn't have the business sense of a half-eaten nacho. We were romantics. Dreamers. Losers. Living our lives as if our heroes' Punk Rock Ideals were more than just an act. We believed the hype, and it's fucked us up.

But when the stage lights go on, and the Marshall is cranked, and my Les Paul is in tune, and my hair is greased up just right, and the kids are looking to hear some noise, something very good happens. When some kid in a hick town I've never been in gets our record in the mail and puts it on and is blown away, something very important is happening. I know this sounds like pompous bullshit. You're laughing and, probably, you think I'm an asshole. And you wouldn't be entirely wrong. Even my mother might tell you as much. But I play fuckin' rock and fuckin' roll. That is enough. I can take my place among the lost icons and the ignored of rock'n'roll history, and know that I did it. I just went out there and played rock'n'roll. I had the guts, and I did it.

Just as I was typing that, I looked down and realized that my fly was open. That pretty much sums it all up, right there.

Chaz Halo, Boston, 2001.

[DISCLAIMER (of sorts): Some of the people and situations in the above piece of fine literature are GREATLY exaggerated by the author for the purposes of whimsy and humor. Other situations are true to life. The characters mentioned are composites of several real-life people and bands, but the author's intent is NOT malicious. This column is intended as a satire of the lifestyle of the punk'n'roll musician. It is not to be taken with total seriousness. Please do not beat up or Karate chop the author. He means well, but is one can short of a six pack. Thank you for your understanding.]

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Website: <http://www.angelfire.com/punk/haloes> ☎

ON TOUR IN JULY

06.29 - Saskatoon, SK
06.30 - Edmonton, AB
07.01 - Calgary, AB
07.02 - Lethbridge, AB
07.03 - Spokane, WA
07.04 - Seattle, WA
07.05 - Portland, OR
07.06 - Napa, CA
07.07 - San Francisco, CA
07.08 - Richmond, CA
07.09 - Reno, NV
07.10 - Las Vegas, NV
07.11 - Off
07.12 - Lawrence, KS

07.13 - Kansas City, KS
07.14 - Urbana, IL
07.15 - tentative
07.16 - Pittsburgh, PA
07.17 - tentative
07.18 - tentative
07.19 - Plattsburgh, NY
07.20 - Sherbrooke, QC
07.21 - Rimouski, QC
07.22 - Quebec City, QC
07.23 - Montreal, QC
07.24 - Ottawa, ON
07.25 - Kingston, ON
07.26 - Grand Rapids, MI
07.27 - Milwaukee, WI
07.28 - Minneapolis, MN

MALEFACTION

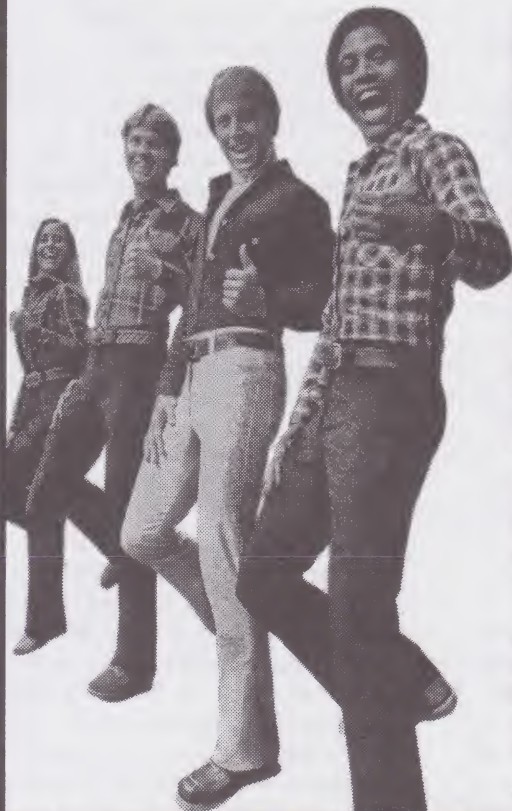
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This is brutal, heavy, and precise hardcore grind at its best. **Malefaction** attack power, corruption, and social injustice at breakneck speed, crushing all in their path.

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OUT JUNE 26TH, 2001

COME ON OVER TO BAT COUNTRY!

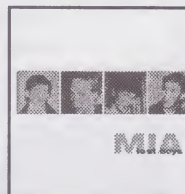


IOWASKA

VINE OF SOULS

England's IOWASKA break the mold with a taste of what punk, psychedelia and spacerock are about - something different. Female vocals backed by dual guitars and heavy drums with a strong political perspective. Aural reference points range from the anarcho-punk/noise pioneers on the Crass and Spider Leg labels, to early Siouxsie and the Banshees, Hawkwind, Ozric Tentacles and the early "Cambodia" side of Dead Kennedys.

VIRUS 257 LP: \$ 9.00 / CD: \$12.00



HALF JAPANESE

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The ambassadors of indie-rock return! Jad Fair and the gang pull off another perfect gem of a record. Deliciously eclectic sounds from nerd-punk diatribes to love songs; there is something for everyone.

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THE CAUSEY WAY

CAUSEY VS. EVERYTHING

The new Causey Way album will show you the light. Thirteen awesome sonic scriptures. More of that biting twisted keyboard rock, distorted guitars, and howling vocals to push you over the edge one more time.

VIRUS 246 LP: \$9.00 / CD: \$12.00

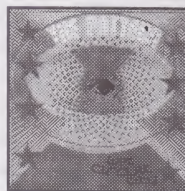


JELLO BIAFRA

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VIRUS 260 3xLP: \$18.50 / 3xCD: \$18.00



THE PATTERN

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The "now sound" of contemporary California, a sweet, soulful super high energy charge reminiscent of British R&B and Beat. Two star-burst blurts of punk boogie energy played with intensity.

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POWER-POP TO THE PEOPLE: RICH COFFEE OF THE EXCESSORIES

BY DIMITRI MONROE, BURNTOUT RECLUSE



THE EXCESSORIES are the cherries 'n' cream of the Modern Pop-scene, putting the POWER back into POWER-POP and writing sunny, fun, catchy songs about such perennial All-American/Southern Californian topics as comic books, slaggin' off work, and bein' a punk rocker who won't grow up and get a job. Starring alumni from such cool ass groups as REDD

KROSS, the DARLINGS, and DONOVAN'S FAIRIES, the EXCESSORIES boast the beautiful voices and amazing guitar of husband and wife team MELANIE AND RICH COFFEE. For years, JEFF DAHL has called RICH COFFEE "the best guitar player in Hollywood..." As you may know, I used to drink some, a little splash on a social occasion to break the ice, and can't remember exactly when I first met RICH COFFEE. Maybe through a whiskey-haze at a JEFF DAHL gig at Rajis several years ago? Or was it when he subscribed to one of my old rantzines, *Anorexic Teenage Sexgods* or *Ready To Snap*? I dunno, but we've corresponded for years, I've loved all his bands, especially, the ALTER EGOS, the EGO MANIACS, the TOMMYKNOCKERS, and now - WOW! - the EXCESSORIES! All you lucky fuckers out there in that glorious California sun should have no trouble seein' the EXCESSORIES live, but the rest of us will have to make due with their upcoming seven inchers and albums.

Not to mention the following career retrospective with Hollywood's

long-time King of Garage/Punk/Glam-Glitter/Power-Pop Guitar, RICH COFFEE of the EXCESSORIES!

DIMITRI MONROE: I did another career retrospective piece with my friend,

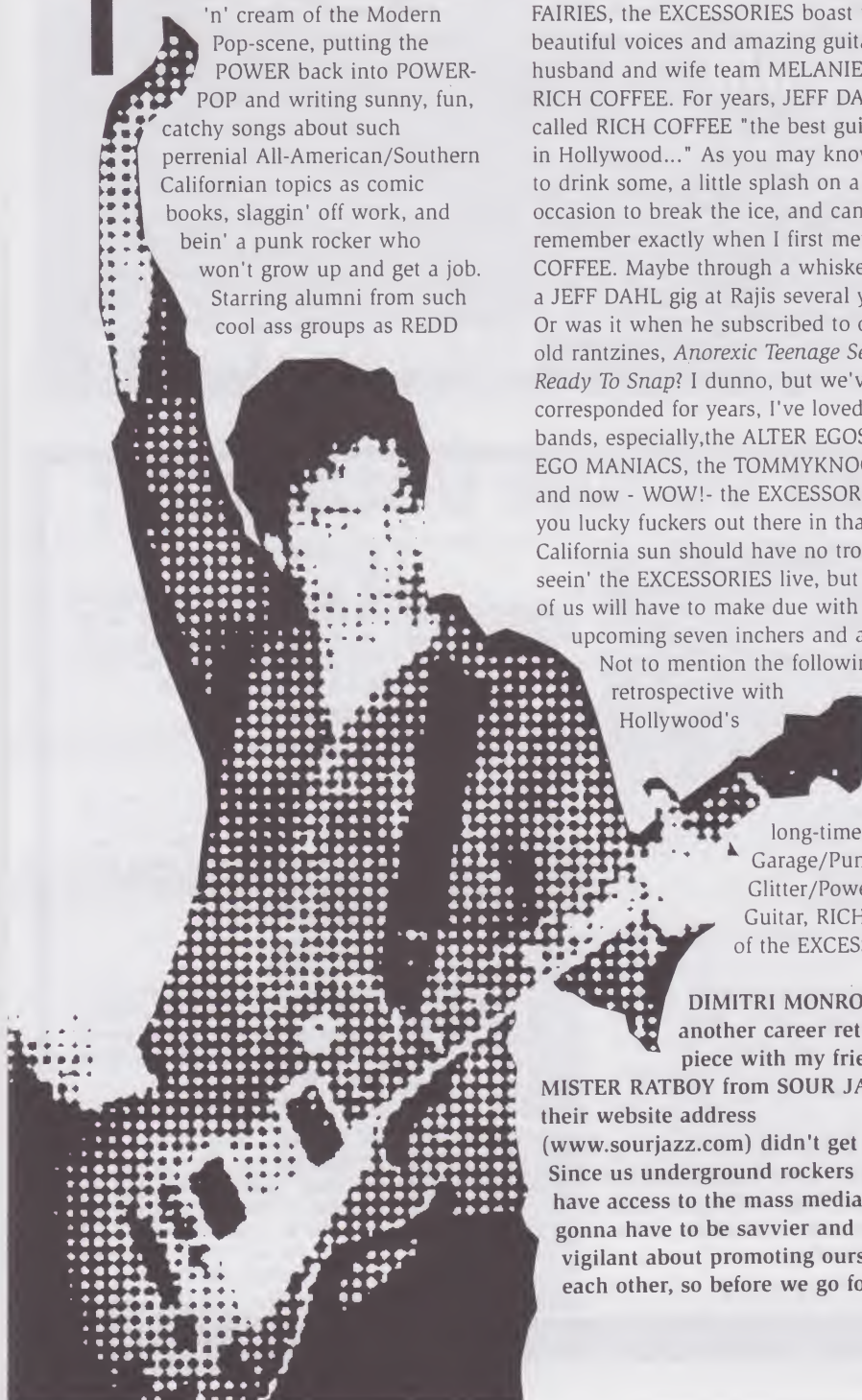
MISTER RATBOY from SOUR JAZZ, but their website address (www.sourjazz.com) didn't get printed. Since us underground rockers no longer have access to the mass media, we're gonna have to be savvier and more vigilant about promoting ourselves and each other, so before we go forth

together, let's first establish where the People can contact you...

RICH COFFEE: My addresses are Rich Coffee, PO Box 2645, Hollywood, CA, 90078; email: theexcessories@aol.com; website: www.theexcessories.com. And I'm starting my own website at: www.geocities.com/iamrichcoffee

DIMITRI MONROE: Please discuss your introductions to music, Midwestern origins, and flight to Californ-i-a....

RICH COFFEE: You do give open-ended questions, don't you?! I guess I should get a drink first! OK, I grew up in a small town in Indiana - real farmlands! - in a large, fairly musical family. Everyone from my grandparents (at least) on down played/sang/etc. In fact, my Dad's parents used to play for silent movies! My older brothers/sisters always had the radio on, and I listened to their records and watched all the hip TV shows of the 60's, etc. My brother taught me the basics of guitar (he was into folk music) and I learned r'n'r from there - this was when i was about 11 or 12. I was always into heavy & flashy r'n'r - 60's garage, heavy metal, the WHO, Detroit, glitter, etc. Bands with a show as well as great songs were my inspiration - from ALICE COOPER to HENDRIX, the WHO, DOLLS, MC5, STOOGES, and on and on. I remember being caught by my sister doing a backbend on the floor with my acoustic guitar and her asking "what the hell are you doing?!" I played in a few basement bands out there, did some recordings with the infamous GIZMOS (who were just a bunch of penpals meeting in a bedroom recording studio and doing a bunch of KENNE HIGHLAND'S songs), and then moved out to L.A. in 1979. I wanted to get to somewhere with some kind of music scene (there was a little going on in Chicago, but it was fairly well behind the



coasts). I debated between N.Y. and L.A., but after several record cold winters, I headed for sunny SoCal! I've been in Hollywood ever since!

DIMITRI MONROE: You've been a Hollywood stalwart for many years now. Which era of Tinseltown Rock'n'roll was the most exciting and gratifying to have participated in?

RICH COFFEE: Well, I missed the cool glitter scene out here, but I caught most of the early LA punk and everything after that....Every period has had some great and some dreadful music out here - I loved going to the Hong Kong Cafe in the early punk days and seeing everyone (ZEROS/X/DEAD KENNEDYS/BLACK FLAG/CIRCLE JERKS/and everyone else you could think of), but the 80's had a super garage revival out here with some of the best bands of that genre and some very hip people. While that was going on, there were also bands that I loved, like TEX & THE HORSEHEADS, CELEBRITY SKIN, DEVIL SQUARES, REDD KROSS, LAZY COWGIRLS, MIRACLE WORKERS, the BEGUILED, SCREAMIN' SIRENS, and lots more that I'm forgetting about! The 90's started to get a little sour, so by the middle of the decade, I sorta gave up a bit until I was asked to sit in with a few bands and discovered great bands and great friends of mine like the STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS, the B-MOVIE RATS, DOORSLAMMER, the BELLRAYS, etc. So, I guess you can't say I have a favorite time, unless it's the time that I'm involved with at the moment!

DIMITRI MONROE: You've had quite an illustrious and vital career as a rock'n'roll dynamo, but due to the absence of a cool national rock-media, music fans outside of California and our little affiliated network of correspondants may not be hip to all the great work you've been a part of.. Could you please discuss some of your groups, chronologically, and summarize highlights from each?

RICH COFFEE: Ultra Wow! How long is this gonna be?

A) THE GIZMOS...

RICH COFFEE: OK, as i said, the GIZMOS were the "band that was not really a band" in Indiana - we just got together, recorded, and did 2 or 3 gigs total! I don't think any of the gigs included everyone on the

records either! That was just a group of teenagers with lousy equipment and no idea how to make do in the low low low low budget studio (a SMALL bedroom) where we all played live, and since it was so small we had to play super quietly and our crappy equipment sounded even worse than usual! I guess that's what people like about it! It's pre-punk cuz we didn't know how to do any better! After i moved to L.A., I met the UNCLAIMED and joined them in 1981, and that lasted, in varying line-ups, until 1984. That was a lot of fun and very traditional 60's garage. The mastermind was SHELLEY GANZ, and I played guitar and some keyboards. It was a really good band, but I eventually wanted to expand a little and that was not what the UNCLAIMED were about. So I moved on to THEE FOURGIVEN...

B) THE UNCLAIMED...

RICH COFFEE: Like I said, we were doing traditional 60's garage at a time when NO ONE else was doing it (except maybe the CHESTERFIELD KINGS in N.Y.), and so we played with all kinds of bands out here. We did gigs with the FLESH TONES, REDD KROSS, and the GUN CLUB. We opened for the CRAMPS, and had bands like the BANGLES and SALVATION ARMY (pre-THREE O'CLOCK) open for us. And we taught them a few things! Since there wasn't a "garage scene" yet, we played with punk bands a lot. In fact, there were a couple of riots - one where the punks were throwing everything that wasn't nailed down at us, and when I threw something back, the whole place almost exploded! After I got hit with a 3-foot tall standing ashtray between the eyes, we split! All this, simply because we had long hair! The people causing trouble were pussies though, and gave us a wide berth as we walked through them to leave the stage! Usually we went over well with every crowd - just not the ones with closed minds! (One of Shelley's best answers to the usual shout of "cut your hair" was "Grow Your Mind!")

C) THEE FOURGIVEN...

RICH COFFEE: I started THEE FOURGIVEN because I was writing songs that weren't fitting into the UNCLAIMED and I wanted to expand a little - I wanted to sound more like the MC5 in the mid-60's rather than the COUNT 5 (who I still loved, but...). The other guys in the UNCLAIMED - RAY FLORES on bass and MATT ROBERTS on

drums - wanted to do something different as well, so they came along with me! At this time, there was a bit of a 60's scene starting, and we were at the forefront of that - playing the early RAVE UP CLUB (an AMAZING place where the new garage scene in L.A. really caught on. It was a place where there was a party every weekend and our bands got to play! It wasn't a legal club, so all ages were welcome and everyone snuck in alcohol! It was a wild time!), the CAVERN CLUB (which was incredibly tiny!), and anywhere else we could play. But we played with everyone from PUSSY GALORE to 80's metal bands and all the really cool bands that were playing town at the time! We crossed over a lot! We recorded three studio LPs with Dionysus Records, a German 45, and countless compilations! I honestly don't remember all of them anymore! Matt quit after the first record and we got a young skateboarding pal of Ray's named BELA HORVATH on drums. With two skater/surfers in the band, there were lots of injuries when it came time to play! In 1987, we did two tours of Europe, which were a blast! We played everything from bunkers to hockey arenas to castles to Swiss chalets to old factories! Super people, great response - it was like living a rock star's dream! So terrific! The first tour was with our pals the MIRACLE WORKERS, and that was tons of fun, and the second was with the new version of the UNCLAIMED, but Shelley (the singer) quit after just a few shows cuz he had to get up too early! So that put a damper on some shows cuz promoters were upset that it wasn't the "real" UNCLAIMED (the rest of the band went on without him and did an incredible job!). But it was still well worth it and a live record came out of it - "Rock & Hard Rolls: Live in Europe" - which included THEE FOURGIVEN, the UNCLAIMED, and LEE JOSEPH doing a solo set! But by early 1989, after playing around the West coast some more and putting out our last record ("Salvation Guaranteed"), we didn't seem to be going any further. The other guys in the band weren't putting as much into as I was, so I decided to start something new again! Oh, but also during this time, I played with:

D) YARD TRAUMA...

RICH COFFEE: This wasn't my band, but I sat in with them for a while because I was a friend of LEE JOSEPH, who played bass in YARD TRAUMA while also playing in the UNCLAIMED. This was his band that he

brought out from Tucson. We played all over L.A. and outlying areas, and I played on a couple of records and even appeared in a video - a lip sync done in Tucson - THEE FOURGIVEN did one as well - both of which appeared on the Dionysus Rock'n'Roll Video Hour, along with a LOT of other cool L.A. bands! I probably played with YARD TRAUMA for a year or two before deciding that I didn't really have time, and that's when I started:

E) THE TOMMYKNOCKERS...

RICH COFFEE: In fact, the TOMMYKNOCKERS were started with Lee because we were both unhappy with our bands, THEE FOURGIVEN and YARD TRAUMA. I found drummer JOMAR GUCCIO, who had played with the MAD DADDIES in New Jersey before moving out here. We did a few shows and even recorded a 45 before Lee changed his mind and went back to YARD TRAUMA. CHRIS HARLOCK joined on bass, and we recorded a German 12" called "Caught Dead Inside". Before we could go on a scheduled European tour, both Chris & Jomar quit! In fact, Jomar started a fight with me because he wanted to quit! I've never quite figured that one out! But then I was drinking at one of the TOMMYKNOCKERS' favorite bar/clubs, the Shamrock (RIP), and LAURA BENNETT, formerly of the SCREAMIN' SIRENS, was bartending. We knew each other, she bought me a drink and then asked if she could audition! She fit in perfectly and stayed with the band for the rest of its career. A perfect bassist for the group and always a blast to hang out with! AL PENZONE drummed with us for a couple of recording sessions (songs that came out on a 45 and compilations), but after our first European tour he decided to split. We're still friends to this day, but he wasn't ready to do the band at the time,

though he still has fond memories of our trials and tribulations!

The tour had a lot of screw-ups, but it was still a wild time - plenty of crazed drinking and insane shows! I ended up in my underwear for a few gigs, and I even ended up in Laura's underwear at the end of a particularly drunken set - I drank a fifth of scotch by myself during that set! During the solo of the encore, I couldn't even remember what the song was or how to end it, so I crawled off the stage and passed out in a corner. I was then carried into the van, where I puked, and later woke up at a party in the arms of a girl I had never met before! There was also a real fanatical fan who literally ended up in an asylum after spending a couple of days with us! (and pissing off everyone we were hanging out with!). Laura got into a drinking contest with the Germans we were with and won, but ended up so toasted that she lost us at a club and disappeared for hours with some people that she didn't even know! Luckily, they brought her back and didn't dump her in a river somewhere! She also ended up on a chicken farmer's ranch at one point! On this tour we met our good friends, the EMBRYONICS, an incredible German band of looneys! We only played a few shows with them on this first tour, but the next two tours were with them. We're all still close friends to this day! I could tell a zillion stories, but I won't!

When we got back and Al quit, we put out an ad. And one day I opened my door to a near mirror image of myself, and we had our new drummer, ROGER WARD! He could play like Keith Moon or Charlie Watts, depending on what was needed; he was also easy-going, and reasonably sane, and he even owned a van! Wow! From our very first show, everyone realized that THIS was the perfect TOMMYKNOCKERS lineup! We played all over the West coast, brought

the EMBRYONICS over here (where they almost got signed to a major label! It didn't happen, but they came closer in a week than we ever did!), recorded a couple of LPs and a lot of unreleased songs, and did two more European tours! Between us and the EMBRYONICS, we had several trips to the hospital, had several broken bones, broke tons of equipment, spilled and drank liters of alcohol, had sex in all kinds of places, took drugs in numerous countries, saw mind-boggling sights like the Acropolis in Athens and plenty of cathedrals, castles, fortresses, etc. We even played in a Napoleonic fortress, complete with cobblestone floors and the wildest punk audience anywhere, since they would stage-dive, regardless of the fact that they'd kill themselves if they hit the floor! I could go on and on - it was an incredible trip, and the Embryonics became one of the best live bands in the world! On these tours we'd always end the nights with the Tommyonics - everyone in both bands onstage all at once making all kinds of chaotic noise! We never wanted to leave! We missed the L.A. Rodney King riots by a day and had to watch tanks going down the streets where we lived on TVs in backstage rooms! That was exciting! We also got to play in Mexico City and got to see Aztec ruins as well as play for some very hip people! Our last record, "The Clarity is So Clear", came out in early 1994 and unfortunately, shortly afterwards, Laura quit for personal reasons. I recruited another bassist that I had worked with (I'll get into that in a little bit!) named MELANIE BRUCK, but we only got as far as the rehearsal room before Roger decided that he was going to move back to St Louis. We did one last farewell record release gig with Laura, then called it a day! However, we have done a couple of reunion shows that have reminded people how good we were! It may happen again

"I DRANK A FIFTH OF SCOTCH BY MYSELF DURING THAT SET! DURING THE SOLO OF THE ENCORE, I COULDN'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT THE SONG WAS OR HOW TO END IT, SO I CRAWLED OFF THE STAGE AND PASSED OUT IN A CORNER."

some day!

F) BIG WOW...

RICH COFFEE: While in the TOMMYKNOCKERS, I started another band with some friends, based around the songs of TRACY COLBY (ex-DICKTIT) and MIKE CZEKAJ (ex-FUZZTONES). This was a sorta pop/punk/rock band that also featured Melanie. This was the first band I had played in with Melanie, but I had seen her play with DICKTIT, the MARYJANES, and OUTSIDEINSIDE. So this was the start of our history! There were some fantastic songs here, but it never totally clicked and we broke up for numerous reasons after about a year. Also, during this time I played a few shows with the MIRACLE WORKERS, and we talked about me joining, but nothing more ever came of it. There were too many egos (including mine, of course!) involved, but we were close friends.

G) THE ALTER EGOS...

RICH COFFEE: The TOMMYKNOCKERS had a big fan in San Francisco named Fast Mike, who set up a Halloween show for us. Unfortunately, everyone had quit the TKs by then, but Mike wouldn't take no for an answer! So, I asked Mike Czeka and Melanie if they wanted to be TOMMYKNOCKERS for a night, and they said yes! This went so well that we decided to continue on, but I wanted to use a new name because I wanted to do something a little different - a bit more power-pop - than the TKs, so we became the ALTER EGOS. We were all quiet people offstage and fairly untamed onstage, so the name seemed fitting! We continued playing all over, put out a 45, appeared on a comp, and eventually put out a CD on 1 + 2 Records called "Egomania". When Mike quit to work on his own tunes, I decided to take a rest for a while. I was sick of the business side of things anyway, and just didn't know if I wanted to play in any bands anymore! Of course, that didn't last long!

H) THE BLACK WIDOWS...

RICH COFFEE: This is an instrumental band that I met that plays in boiler suits and masks and have secret identities! It's the best instrumental group in the universe, and the live shows are more chaotic than most punk bands could even dream of! All, of course, while playing

note-perfect! I can't reveal who is in the band, but through them I met ART JACKSON, who became one of my best friends. I wasn't serious about starting anything, but I told him about this idea I had for a band:

I) THE EGOMANIACS...

RICH COFFEE: There are a lot of HORRIBLE bands in L.A., and after seeing one particularly dreadful, boring, pretentious, long-winded group, I decided that LA needed a band like the Ramones - short (no more than two minutes), catchy songs, a fun image and no more than 20

minute sets! Art, being one of the biggest RAMONES fans in the known universe, said "I'll play in it," and so we started the EGOMANIACS! We asked Melanie (her again!) to join, but she had other commitments so we got Tracy Colby (her again!) on bass and TODD WESTOVER on drums. We kept our promise of songs that were no more than two minutes, and often closer to one (!), kept our sets short and wore matching jackets! We recorded about an LP's worth of songs, but only one has come out so far, on a compilation. A 45 is still supposed to come out some day, though I'm not holding my breath! But you never know! From working with Todd, I



ended up in his band:

J) DOORSLAMMER...

RICH COFFEE: The name is a hot rod term, and seeing as how Todd had to make a career choice between being a race driver or a musician, and since he still works at a racing magazine, it all makes sense! He's had a revolving group of musicians (including FRANK from the CHEETAHS, JIMMY JAMES of the COMA-TONES/HANGMEN, BOB VENNUM of the BELLRAYS, and many others) to augment his bass playing, singing, and songs, and I was one of the many to join! Melanie (yes, once more!) eventually also ended up as a guitar player for Todd until he joined the BELLRAYS and got too busy to continue. Oh yeah, over the years I've also done recordings with numerous bands, including the KINGS OF OBLIVION (an LA band - I think there's more than one! - though I doubt if my recordings have ever been released), LISA LOMBARDO (the GARGOYLES) - I play lead guitar on her solo CD on Ultra-Under Records, the UNTOLD FABLES (actually, just keyboards on one song), and probably some others that I've forgotten about! I also played live with JEFF DAHL for about a year until he needed a touring band; I couldn't go, so he found a new line up.

K) THE EXCESSORIES...

RICH COFFEE: Shortly after I started the EGO MANIACS, Melanie joined a band called SLUTS FOR HIRE and we ended up going out together! I've always thought that she was a terrific singer (she did a couple of songs in the ALTER EGOS) and songwriter, and so after our other bands split up I was finally able to talk her into starting a band, with her as the frontperson/songwriter! We recruited

JANET HOUSDEN (ex-REDD KROSS/SUPERKOLLS/current SHAKES) on bass, and Todd sat in on drums for a while until we got our current pounder, ROY MORGAN, who used to play with the DARLINGS and the NEUROTICS! We've gotten a superb response since our first show, and will be on several upcoming compilations. We're also working on a release of our own as soon as we talk someone into doing it! Hopefully soon! If you like energetic, poppy-punk with fantastic, melodic female vocals, you'll love this band!

DIMITRI MONROE: Congratulations on your and Melanie's nuptials! Brilliant work, Rich, the old lady's a fox AND boy, can she sing! The EXCESSORIES may be your best band yet! I know there's probably a zillion bands out there that TRY to sound like you guys, but to my ears you've achieved the perfect cross between the RAMONES and GO GO's, and all my favorite near-forgotten POWER-POP favorites like the PLIMSOULS and HOLLY & THE ITALIANS! That kinda music never goes out of style, and always works when it's packaged well and there's a dynamic and attractive personality upfront. I'll be real surprised if the EXCESSORIES don't become huge...

RICH COFFEE: Thanks! She's the best, and we were made for each other! We've known each other for probably at least eight years now and started going out almost four years ago! We got engaged almost two years ago, and finally got it together to get married, which was wonderful! Yes, she's gorgeous and talented! I'm a lucky guy!

DIMITRI MONROE: Could you please bring us up to date on the fantastic EXCESSORIES: origins of; who does what,

being a singer versus just being guitar-man, songwriting, etc.

RICH COFFEE: Melanie writes all of the original songs, though I've helped a little here and there. 98% (or more) of it is all Melanie, though! I just help out when she's stuck with something. I've had a great time just playing guitar! It lets me jump around more on stage, and Mel has a MUCH better voice than me anyway! We're playing all over LA and the West coast - wherever people will have us!

DIMITRI MONROE: Regarding potential labels, the EXCESSORIES seem almost tailor-made for SYMPATHY, obviously; girls, power-pop, garage-rock-roots, cool threads - ain't that their whole formula, pretty much? - but I'd be afraid that you might get lost in the shuffle. LONG GONE seems to sign ANY band with females, and he just puts so much stuff out. So, as a fan, I'm kinda hoping a sensible capitalist with a bigger label, a modern day Miles Copeland, comes along and discovers you guys, cuz with the state of radio, State Radio, in fact, I suspect there's even an audience for the EXCESSORIES among young people who are sick of being force-fed all that insipid product. I think teenagers would dig rock'n'roll music with catchy bubblegum melodies and big, badass guitars. They just never get exposed to it, cuz MTV is strong-arming all this corporate drivel into our consciousness all day long. Any thoughts or label interest, thus far?

RICH COFFEE: We'll have to see who has good enough taste to put out the EXCESSORIES! We're still "shopping" at the moment! Hopefully, something will be out before too long!

DIMITRI MONROE: I'm getting sick of

" I KNOW THAT THERE ARE COOL KIDS OUT THERE, BUT THEY'RE NOT IN THE MAINSTREAM. HOPEFULLY, THEY'LL KEEP THE FLAME BURNING! "

this vulgar corporate monopoly of all the media, who keep trumpeting some big "Return to Rock" when they really mean Limp Bizkit and Kid Rock. I'm so starved for culture in Cincinnati, I find myself actually humming along to some THIRD EYE BLIND or GOO GOO DOLLS song, cuz there's usually a hook, and as crass as those bands are/became after their celebrity make-over, they still beat Puff Daddy and Matchbox 20. Can you name even one current Radio band you like and, if not, who are some of your favorite current groups?

RICH COFFEE: Y'know, I honestly pay NO attention to the radio or to major zines, so I literally have NO IDEA who is even in the Top Ten these days! I'm not kidding - I couldn't name one million-selling group! I've been outta touch for years - decades probably! I can't stand listening to bad music, so I only listen to my records and tapes! But as far as new groups, I like bands like the HELLACOPTERS, the GROOVIE GHOULES, TURBONEGRO, CHIXDIGGIT, DARLINGTON, NASHVILLE PUSSY, the DICTATORS, the DRAGONS, of course our friends here in LA, the STREET WALKIN' CHEETAHS, B-MOVIE RATS, TOOTHPICK ELBOW, and others that I know I'm forgetting! But mostly, I listen to old stuff!

DIMITRI MONROE: I moved to L.A. around ten years ago to catch the tail-end of the GUNS N'ROSES scene, but I was being ridiculously self-destructive at the time, and honestly only remember bits and pieces from that whole part of the decade. What are some of the best and worst things about living there nowadays, cuz having been back in Ohio for the past five years, it's all starting to seem like the Emerald City again. Is there still a vibrant Rock'n'roll nightlife or a penetrable club-scene if you're not personal friends with Alexis Arquette; and has Rodney Bingenheimer found out about the EXCESSORIES yet?

RICH COFFEE: I still like living in L.A., though there's a lot that sucks about it too. I just dunno where else I'd live! I still dig the weather and there are things to do around here, though there's less and less rock'n'roll nowadays. But there's lots of great restaurants, museums, amusement parks, some good bars, some good bands, etc. Just way way way too many people. Traffic is HORRIBLE (it takes Melanie up to two hours to drive her 13-

mile commute!), and there's a lot of scum, but I've got good friends here, too. There are only a few clubs that I go to regularly - Al's Bar, the Garage, Mr. T's Bowl, and not much else. I'll go to other clubs, but only if there's a good band playing. There aren't any really any good hangouts now, like the old days of Rajis and the Shamrock, where you knew you could go down and see some friends and probably hear some good music. I really don't listen to the radio. Rodney does still have his show, but he hasn't gotten any EXCESSORIES music yet. That's one more thing that we have to do.

DIMITRI MONROE: What are you currently listening to?

RICH COFFEE: Like I said, I mostly listen to older stuff - everything from the great Detroit rock to power pop to 60's, to 70's glitter and punk to jazz to folk to whatever. I think I've already listed a bunch of my new fave bands, though like I say, there is much more old than new stuff that I listen to.

DIMITRI MONROE: Given how it's becoming progressively more impossible in this enslaving culture to thrive, without eventually succumbing to the whole crooked sham and buying into the Programmed, Corporate-manufactured, wage-slave, mall-bought, adult-world, twelve-step, working-week, horror-show, and what with America's bedrock worship of dummy-success, conspicuous consumption, blind, ruthless Dollarism, whoever has the most outfits wins. Do you have any hope for the future of Real Rock'n'roll? Where I live they won't even play stuff like the MUFFS on the radio.

RICH COFFEE: I am actually very pessimistic about the future of real rock'n'roll. It's sad, but I think it's fading away! I think there will always (well, in the foreseeable future) be a r'n'r underground, but I think we've passed the time when it'll be hugely popular. R'n'R is OLD, which is a bizarre concept, but I'm old enough to have kids who are college graduates! Why should they be listening to what I like?! They SHOULD be pissing me off, but it's sad that they're pissing me off cuz they're listening to lame, uninspired pap! I know that there are cool kids out there, but they're not in the mainstream. Hopefully, they'll keep the flame burning! I think the Excessories songs are ALL hits in some other alternative Universe. I just don't see it happening here, unfortunately! We're not

looking to become rock stars these days - we just wanna play shows and put out great records! We'll take whatever comes to us, but we're not expecting the world, that's for sure.

DIMITRI MONROE: What do you do to support yourself? Hell, any ideas on what I can do if I resurface out there to avoid the traps of crime, telemarketing, washing dishes, and not getting paid by Bleeker Bob?

RICH COFFEE: We all just have stupid office jobs - nothing special, really. I've worked in the same industry since I moved out here in 1979, so I make fair money, but not great money - not really as much as I should be making, and I probably would be making more if I hadn't put all my energy into bands! Oh well, I knew that this could happen! As for you, there's still a million job opportunities out here - it all depends on what you wanna do and can do and how much you're trying to make!

DIMITRI MONROE: Being as how the new *Flipside* is taking forever to come out and I'm starved for some teenage-news, can I please ask you what's going on with some other bands in the scene? Your drummer was in the DARLINGS. What's PAIGE DARLING up to now? She seems like quite a character...

RICH COFFEE: I don't think that Paige is playing out with any bands these days - Roy's seen her out and about somewhere, but she keeps asking him to play drums and he turns her down! She has a kid these days, so I'm sure that's enough to keep her busy!

DIMITRI MONROE: Have you ever seen JANE WIEDLIN'S other band, FROSTED, featuring those Sunset Strip-Dude Metal starlettes from the FIZZY BANGERS and EX-IDOLS?

RICH COFFEE: Actually, FROSTED was a decent pop band, though I liked them better live than on CD. They split up quite a while ago, and I only saw 'em once.

DIMITRI MONROE: Heard anything about my alltime favorite Hollywood bands, the COMATONES or MOTORCYCLE BOY, lately? Were you ever into the dirty-glitter of the ULTRAS, ALICE STARR, and JEFF ZEMMETTI'S old band?

RICH COFFEE: The COMATONES have

been doing some reunion shows with everyone - except their old drummer, of course (RIP). I always dug them a lot and they're still good, though they don't play much. I see FRANCOIS on the scene still, but haven't seen any versions of MOTORCYCLE BOY in years! Dunno what he's up to now. Yeah, I dug the ULTRAS too, though that was a decade or so ago as well. I remember seeing them (or some band with ALICE) at a Mexican restaurant that was having rockin' bands for a while, and during the whole set he was spouting all kinds of mean, racist remarks to the (extremely large) Mexican bouncers - and he couldn't have weighed-in at 97 lbs., soaking wet! That could be why I haven't seen him since!

DIMITRI MONROE: Have you heard of TANGERINE?

RICH COFFEE: I've heard the name, and that's about it!

DIMITRI MONROE: Are the EXCESSORIES a part of the Silverlake/Spaceland/Poptopia/Fruitbasket Upset scene? Who are the best bands in that whole clique?

RICH COFFEE:
No, we're

really part of any "scene" and the "Silverlake Scene", like most, was dead before anyone ever heard of it. We live in the Silverlake area, but the only real scene here was years ago and it revolved around a few bands that would have BBQ's together. Melanie used to know some of the people and go to the BBQ's, but none of our bands were ever part of it. But *Fruitbasket Upset* was a hip zine, and they did hype us a bit. Jim Freek's a good guy, and now he writes for *New Times*.

DIMITRI MONROE: I used to have a big crush on JACQUI LYNN, the singer of this band, MINI-SKIRT MOB, once known as X-OFFENDER. Do you know whatever became of them?

RICH COFFEE: Yeah, I had a crush on her too! But I had a girlfriend! I don't know what happened to her, but a couple of the other girls had a band or two, though again, I haven't seen any of them in ages!

DIMITRI MONROE: Ever see JOHN EASDALE & THE NEWCOMERS?

RICH COFFEE: Nope, and I know nothing about 'em!

DIMITRI MONROE: Got to hear the VICE PRINCIPALS yet?

RICH COFFEE: Yeah, they're pretty cool - very HUMBERS-like, and Scott is still a drunken maniac! We've done a couple of shows with them at the Garage.

DIMITRI MONROE: How about HUTCH and ANTHONY CASTILLO'S project, SLOW MOTORCADE?

RICH COFFEE: I have Hutch's solo CD, which sounds good, but there was a special something about the Hutchinsons! Hutch is a great guitar player, as well as a nice guy! He played my HiWatt amp on Anthony's new recordings, but I don't know if it's going to be called Slow Motorcade or not. It sounds excellent so far.

DIMITRI MONROE: The HUNTINGTONS?

RICH COFFEE: Saw 'em once with Darlington at Mr T's, and they put on a superb live show! The CDs aren't as good, but see 'em live if ya can - they're a blast!

DIMITRI MONROE: Do you have the inside skinny on my man TONY FATE's new rock outfit?

RICH COFFEE: I'm not allowed to reveal anything yet, as it's still in its working stages, but have no fear - it'll be smokin'!

DIMITRI MONROE: So when is the TEXAS TERRI/LEAVING TRAINS/EXCESSORIES/DIMITRI MONROE & THE NAKED FLAMES worldwide supertour?

RICH COFFEE: You set it up, and we'll be there! Of course, we'll be headlining and you'll have to meet all of our rider requirements (including a separate dressing room for our midget troupe). But otherwise, I don't see any problems!

DIMITRI MONROE: Are VAN HALEN reforming with DAVID LEE ROTH?

RICH COFFEE: Actually, I think they're reforming, but with Frank of the Streetwalkin' Cheetahs taking David's place!

DIMITRI MONROE: Did you hear the TEXACALA JONES' comeback record last



year?

RICH COFFEE: No, I haven't, but I love the Horseheads! The TK's even backed up Mike Martt for a solo show one time cuz we were all pals.

DIMITRI MONROE: Some desert island discs?

RICH COFFEE: Oh man, how many do I get?! This is always soooo hard! OK, Alice Cooper's "Love It To Death", the Stooges' "Funhouse", the MC5's "Kick Out The Jams", the Jimi Hendrix Experience's "Axis Bold As Love", the Ramones' first album (did I mention how they changed my life?!), the Who's "Meaty Beaty Big & Bouncy", the New York Dolls' "Too Much Too Soon", and about a million more! I currently have around 3000 LPs and 1000 or so CDs, so it's kinda hard to choose!

DIMITRI MONROE: All-time POWER-POP GREATS, and WHY...

RICH COFFEE: Whoa! Well, the first two to come to mind are 20/20 and the RECORDS, cuz to me they both epitomize what power-pop is all about - great songs and harmonies with some real energy! CHEAP TRICK, of course, DWIGHT TWILLEY, PEZBAND, MATERIAL ISSUE, the REAL KIDS, the RUBINOOS, etc., and great new bands like DM3, the YUM YUMS, the DECIBALS, the CHEEKS, and on and on! Again, I'm sure I'm forgetting some! Can't really put into words what makes 'em great - hell, it's all a matter of taste, isn't it?!

DIMITRI MONROE: Discography?

RICH COFFEE: This will take some time! Lemme see...

THE GIZMOS:

self-titled 4-song 7" EP
"Amerika First" 7"
"Gizmos World Tour" 7"
"Gizmos CD with all three 7"-ers and out-takes
(all on Gulcher Records)

THE UNCLAIMED:

self -titled 7-song 12" record (Hysteria Records)

THEE FOURGIVEN:

"It Ain't Pretty Down Here"

"Testify!"

"Salvation Guaranteed"

"Rock & Hard Rolls - Live in Europe" (with the Unclaimed and Lee Joseph solo)

"Hang Up" on "Sounds Of Now" compilation

(all of the above on Dionysus Records)

"Spiders in my Sink" on ROIR's "Garage Sale!" cassette

"Yeah!" on Voxx's "Battle of the Garages, Vol. 3"

"Voila!" - alternative version of "It Ain't Pretty Down Here" with 3 new songs (on France's Lolita Records)

"Wrong Side of Your Mind" on Bonafide's "Deadly Spawn" compilation

"She Shines/Be My Lover" 45 on Mystery Scene Records (Germany)

"Songs of Ordinary Madness" mini-LP on LSD Records (Germany)

"Love is Fading" on Mystery Scene Records comp "Dimensions of Sound"

THE UNTOLD FABLES:

I played keyboards on "It's a Cryin' Shame" on their LP "Every Mother's Nightmare" (Dionysus)

LISA LOMBARDO:

I played lead guitar on her solo record: "Lisa & Her Slaves" on Ultra Under Records

THE TOMMYKNOCKERS:

"Snake Lightning" - 3-song EP on Sympathy For the Record Industry
"Caught Dead Inside" - 7-song 12" mini-LP (Unique Records, Germany)

"Noisy Beast/More To Come" 45 (Dionysus)

"Kill City" on "What Wave" compilation tape #19

"Why Can't You See" on "What Wave" comp #20

"New Rose" on *CrypticTymes* comp tape,
"Some Kind of Weirdos in That Garage There!"

"We Want the Airwaves" on

"GabbaGabbaHey" comp (XXX Records)

"Perception Is Reality" - LP/CD on Skyclad Records

"End of my Mind/Haircut & Attitude" 45 (Unique Records)

"Hot" on "Hit By A Succession of Bricks" comp on Skyclad

"One Too Many/Have Faith" 45 on Helter Skelter Records (Italy)

"Don't Burn Your Bridges" on "Electric Carnival" comp on Kinetic Vibes Records (France)

"I Want You" on *Abus Dangereuz Magazine* #28 free CD (France)

"Don't Cut Me Off!" on "Auto Body Experience" comp on Trigon Records (LA)

"The Clarity Is So Clear" - LP/CD on Helter Skelter

THE ALTER EGOS:

3-song 7" on 1 + 2 Records (Japan)

"Egomania!" CD on 1 + 2

"(Gimme Gimme) I've Been Good" on the "Vital Gesture" Xmas Tape

THE EGOMANIACS:

"Are You Satisfied" on "Beat Party" comp



on 1 + 2 Records
Also, a possible 7" EP

DOORSLAMMER:

4 songs on the 1 + 2 release of the self-titled CD

Also, upcoming tracks on a Flamin' Groovies tribute (Spain), Cheap Trick tribute, and Motley Crüe (!!) tribute

THE EXCESSORIES:

all forthcoming:

"In the Flesh" on a Sympathy for the Record Industry tribute LP

"Lost & Found" on RAFR, Vol 3

"Punk Rock Boy" on a Spanish comp
And we're working on a full length!

There are also a large number of unreleased tracks by the Tommyknockers and Egomaniacs, and I have recorded with bands like the Kings of Oblivion, Beltane, the Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, and others that have never seen the light of day! There's probably more that I'm not remembering. ☺



Back in one of my first columns for *Hit List*, I made the statement that “the entire fucking music biz is rotten from top to bottom.” I could literally write a book on the subject — a BIG, THICK book. Maybe someday I will, but in the meantime I’ll have to be satisfied by chipping away at it now and then. Today’s lesson concerns an institution that has had lovers of mainstream and sometimes not-so-mainstream music by the balls for years: Ticketmaster.

I am very, very familiar with Ticketmaster, unfortunately. A couple years or so ago, as part of my supervisory duties working for Tower Records, I was an official Ticketmaster agent! Now I am well aware of the fact that a lot of you lump Tower and Ticketmaster together as being equally evil and awful. If and when I ever do get a chance to write that book about the music biz, I’ll have plenty to bitch

Thinkin’ & Drinkin’ w/ The Whiskey Rebel



about concerning Tower. To be fair, though, Tower Records does have its good side, which I’ve discussed in an earlier column in more detail. Their

refund policy to customers is generous and, excluding the low pay rate,

they treat their employees fairly well. For those of you who keep track of such matters, Tower Records is just about the least racist, sexist and homophobic employer I’ve come across. There are no piss tests, and the company founder is a devoted pothead. You can be nodding off high on dope at your post, and Tower will more than likely “counsel” you rather than fire your junkie ass.

Who knows, I might even still be working for Tower if it weren’t for the fact that Ticketmaster had bamboozled some middle manager based in Sacramento into installing a goddamn ticket computer terminal in our store. As a lowly clerk, I never had to deal with asshole ticket customers. I never knew how goddamned lucky I was. The guy who I replaced as supervisor, Keith, quit after spending a hellish hour running around in circles trying to deal with his regular duties while dealing with ticket customers. The store employed a couple of regular girls whose job it was to sit and deal exclusively with Ticketmaster. Unfortunately, several nights a week neither was scheduled for work, which meant that it had to be covered by a supervisor. The supers were also paged to sell tickets whenever the ticket cunts took a smoke or lunch break or went to take a fucking crap.

I was promoted a couple days after Keith stormed out of the building for good. The store manager, Bill Duffy, warned me dur-

ing my interview that I was responsible for Ticketmaster. I figured it wouldn’t be such a big deal. I mean, 90% of the customers in our store were such jackasses that I couldn’t imagine how the ticket buyers could be any worse. But I was wrong, horribly wrong. The difference is that Tower customers might become pissed off while shopping at the store, but Ticketmaster customers are pissed off LONG BEFORE they GET to the store. By the time they got there, they’d be spoiling for a fight.

To illustrate my point, let’s take a customer who wants to buy tickets to the upcoming Jimmy Buffett concert. They see the ad in the paper and call the Ticketmaster phone number. A “friendly” voicemail recording tells them that they need to go to Tower records on South Street to buy tickets. A lot of customers at this point call Tower to make sure that the tickets they want are still available. That’s a valid question, isn’t it? Unfortunately Ticketmaster and Tower REFUSE TO GIVE INFORMATION over the telephone. Even if the event is sold out, the customer has to come to the store in person to find out. This is a means of forcing people to make a trip to Tower, and should therefore be good for business, right? BULLSHIT! People that get jacked around like this only arrive at Tower PISSED OFF. For one thing, metered parking is fucking IMPOSSIBLE to find anywhere near South Street during most hours of the day. You can of course pay for a space, but that’ll set you back around \$7 or so. At peak hours the entire surrounding area is bogged down in gridlock due to the arrival of masses of gum-chewing, rubber-necking humanoids. So, the would-be customer has to park a few blocks away and walk to Tower, where they will be confronted at the entrance by AT LEAST ONE filthy, lazy leech begging for change. If they are white and look vulnerable or like they’re from the Jersey suburbs, they’ll possibly be harassed when they park their car by a crackhead with his hand out who will cheerfully wave them into their parking spot.

Ticketmaster customers are pissed off LONG BEFORE they GET to the store.

At any rate, a lot of ticket customers are upset by the time they run the gauntlet of human vermin to get to the “convenient” Ticketmaster location. Upon entering the store many ticket-seeking customers unwittingly get into the line for retail CD

purchases. After waiting several minutes, they are told they’ve been standing in the wrong line and are shown to the Ticketmaster counter. Imagine how furious some customers get at this point, especially after they see the big “CASH ONLY...No Credit Cards” sign hanging prominently at the Ticketmaster counter. A full 2/3 of the customers who show up for tickets have to exit back out onto South Street and walk 2 1/2 blocks to the only nearby ATM machine (which hopefully remains in service). Of course, they’re likely to be hassled again by more homeless scumbags during their stroll. South Street is usually littered with trash, and the ground is sticky from puke and urine (there are NO public restrooms in the vicinity). By the time they get back to the Ticketmaster desk...WHOOOOOO BOY! They’re in a great mood!

At this point, if they are lucky, they have about a 50% shot that one of the designated Ticket bitches will even be there. If not, a supervisor will be paged (the average response time was

about 4 minutes, though it often took 15 minutes). The customer will be given a map showing how far back in the arena the show is sold out; in most cases, the customer will be shocked to learn how bad the remaining tickets are. The Ticketmaster employee will cheerfully explain that there was a two-block long line of other folks the day that Jimmy Buffett tickets went on sale. In other words, the customer is told, in not so many words, that unless they had stood for hours on a bumpuke-encrusted sidewalk in front of Tower at the crack of dawn, then they NEVER DID stand a chance at getting decent seats. Many customers storm out of the store at this point, and are probably sorry that they ever heard that Mr. Buffett was coming to town. The brave ones who choose to purchase seats in the nosebleed section are then informed that there "will be a \$5 service charge per ticket." Lots of customers go ballistic when they hear this, since many of them have to walk BACK TO THE ATM! Of course, they're warned that the tickets can't be held for them, so they'd better hurry or else they'll find themselves with even WORSE seats. This is a very likely proposition, since the tickets are sold on hundreds of terminals all over New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Are you beginning to see what I mean about ticket customers being more pissed off than ordinary Tower customers?? And lemme tell you readers who have never had "fun" working with the public: if you deal with a line of angry, blatantly manipulated customers for an hour or so, it's gonna leave you pissed off too.

Ticketmaster is DESIGNED, even GUARANTEED, to piss off customers. Back in the late 70s in NYC, a disco called Studio 54 became famous for the lines of customers it attracted. In my book, anybody with any sense would NEVER wait in a line to get into a club; of course, the sorts of fools who are attracted to discos are by definition brainless sheep. They actually got excited when they saw a line, as if whatever was behind the door MUST be worth waiting for. I remember a club in Portland back in the early 90s that hired a doorman to keep people waiting outside of the club so that people driving by would think "WOW, something cool must be happening there!". Even I wondered what was going on when I drove by the place. In the case of that club, there was NOTHING happening there — people would wait for a half hour to get in, only to be welcomed by a dead, 3/4 empty club. Ticketmaster STRIVES to create a similar "BUZZ," a sort of carnival atmosphere outside of their ticket locations. They have successfully created a system that leaves ticket consumers feeling LUCKY for the opportunity to spend perhaps \$55 a whack (plus a \$6.50 service charge per ticket) to see most popular acts performing in major cities from coast to coast. Of course, labels and artists don't mind a little bit of manufactured hysteria either. Hell, what better way in this day and age of mediocre, contrived, copycat artists to make a band of third-rate losers seem like superstars?

Add to this already ugly mix of shameless hype a professional circuit of ticket scalpers. Our Tower store was patronized by a jackass who hired losers that even Tower wasn't desperate enough to hire to stand in line on key days from 7:00 AM or so until 9:00 AM, when Ticketmaster officially opened for business. They all looked desperate and tired and in need of dope or a drink. This guy would bribe or charm the regular Ticketmaster gals into playing footsie with him by making exceptions to Ticketmaster rules. It got so bad that often the scalper would be standing right next to the ticket employee, as if he were supervising the sale of particularly hot tickets.

When tickets for a huge act like Bruce Springstink would go on sale, there would generally be a long line outside of the store from 6:00 AM on. The procedure was for the ticket gal to go outside of the store to issue "lottery" numbers for the customers

standing there. Of course, Scalper Joe would be on the scene ensuring that his troops who were stationed in line got rigged numbers. At the stroke of 9:00, the Ticketmaster computer comes on and a rush of bodies presses forward. The "lucky" lottery number winners are escorted to the front of the line, and tickets are printed and briskly sold until the show sells out...which usually takes about 15 minutes or so, if not less. Then, the disappointed customers outside are told that the show is already sold out.

Wow, what a great way to boost Tower's business — leaving scores of customers PISSED OFF that they waited in vain for tickets so that Scalper Joe could get them all! Of course, Joe and his brood remain just outside the door, having already been clued in about what time the tickets for "suddenly added" second or third or fourth shows would be announced and released. This is all more manipulation. Ticketmaster and Springstink know way the hell ahead of time that they're gonna do additional shows. Of course, it's a nice promotional gesture to act as if the "Boss" is adding the shows as a personal gesture of love to his loyal Philly fans rather than after making a pre-calculated business decision. Either way, the idea is to keep people waiting and standing outside the store in line as long as possible.

Another "generous gesture" often bestowed upon fans by Ticketmaster and certain big name artists are the sale of "obscured vision" seats. These tickets are usually put up for sale a few days before a show, when folks are sad and disappointed that they didn't get tickets to see the latest trendy dumbass passing through town. Usually, a radio ad will announce that these worthless, shitty seats have just been released by Ticketmaster as a goodwill gesture by the artist or band concerned. The invariable result is a tidal wave of morons descending upon Tower South Street. So much hysteria and commotion are created that no one seems to realize they are being sold tickets to seats from which they'll be lucky to see the back of band members' heads walking to and from the stage.

So, into the world of ticket sales I plunged. My first clue that something was wrong with the Ticketmaster system involved their state of the art computer system itself. As a temp or regular employee at many jobs over the years (SHAMELESS PLUG: read all about it in my book *Jobjumper*), I had become familiar with all sorts of computer systems in all sorts of job contexts. The vast majority made sense after minimal study. The Ticketmaster handbook made NO FUCKING SENSE whatsoever. Numbers were seemingly keyed in at random, as if to make it difficult for anyone not initiated into the secretive Order of Ticket Sellers to obtain any information. My brain is capable of playing blindfold chess. I'm the published author of a 342-page book...I've set a few records on math and logic aptitude tests. My S.A.T. scores were in the 1400's. I learned how to use computers before user-friendly software was common, e.g., I used direct commands in MS DOS, Foxbase, and other languages many years ago. In other words, I may be an ugly, obese drunk, but I'm a SMART ugly, obese, drunk. And yet I NEVER felt like I had mastered the insane Ticketmaster system and its seemingly random, unfathomable secret codes.

During my first few attempts at selling tickets, I went into the process with an open mind. By the time I had turned in my notice to quit Tower, I openly cursed Ticketmaster to ticket customers and co-workers, and even to my fellow supers and the management staff at supervisor meetings.

Ticketmaster wasn't bringing any business into the store; if anything, it was alienating possible customers. I remember one

HIT SQUAD

customer in particular. He was a big, black intimidating-looking guy who wanted tickets for a play that was being held up on Broad Street. I was ready to sell him four tickets, but when he heard about the service charge he flipped (to be honest, if the tickets had been \$20 more he probably wouldn't have griped...the fact that they were \$5 more pissed him off simply because it was a "service charge." I'm not sure I can guess exactly why). To try to calm him down, I called the Ticketmaster help line that was supposed to be available to us to walk us through any problems. They advised that I tell the customer to avoid such service charges by buying his tickets directly at the venue box office. OK, that was fine by him.

Two nights later the same guy came in, ready to punch somebody out. He had been to the box office several times. They were NEVER open. The night of the show was fast approaching and more tickets were being sold every day, which meant that with every day that passed the seats he would end up buying would become worse and worse. He DEMANDED that I call the Ticketmaster line again. I calmed him by telling him that I HATED Ticketmaster, that I was a Tower employee, and that I would — the following is a verbatim quote — "be happy to rip the computer off the counter, toss it out onto the sidewalk, and urinate all over it." We looked each other in the eye and instantly bonded. I decided I'd fight for this guy no matter how long it took, no matter how many Ticketmaster assholes put me on hold. The dude recognized my sincerity, and we both nodded our understanding. It was him and me versus Ticketmaster.

I spent about ten minutes trying to convey this man's complaints to a snotty bitch working the TM hotline. Finally, I asked to speak to HER supervisor. The customer winked his approval when he heard that; we both grinned and exchanged nods as I waited for the super to come on the line. After about ten more minutes of listening to muzak I wondered if I had been cut off; meanwhile, the store was going to hell in a handbasket. I had a couple customers waiting to argue about returns, and we were about fifteen minutes late in changing over the clerks' cash register shifts. It can all wait, I thought; finally, I had a classic example of pisspoor Ticketmaster service to take to my store manager, so I was going to see this one through. Five more minutes went by. Finally, a supervisor came on the line. I explained that the poor customer was sent to the box office to buy tickets, but that it never seemed to be open and their hours weren't posted. I explained that the customer was tired of being jerked around; if the box office for the theater was never going to be open, why didn't they apologize for having sent the poor guy there. He'd probably end up buying tickets from our store and relent to the service charges if they'd simply fess up and admit that they were wasting his time. The supervisor then put me on hold...Meanwhile, three clerks were waiting to go to lunch and were being held up by my call to Ticketmaster. A fellow super was waiting to close down Ticketmaster for the day, so that he could go home on time. We were ALL waiting on Ticketmaster. Finally, after holding the line for several more minutes, I was CUT OFF! I couldn't believe it. I called back immediately, and was roadblocked by a cheerful TM voicemail machine.

The mean-looking ticket customer was PISSED! Luckily not at me, but he was ready to go find the TM office and beat the shit out of somebody. He shook my hand and headed out the door with blood in his eye. I wished him luck! Ticketmaster never called back, of course, even though they had our store number

and knew that we had a hostile customer awaiting their call. I hope he managed to find the TM office! Their attitude was simply "FUCK YOU, it's time for US to clock out too."

When the Spice Girls came to town, it broke my jaded, alcoholic heart to have to turn away groups of cute, happy little 10-12 year old girls who wanted to buy tickets. The fact of the matter was that Scalper Joe had gotten ahold of a slew of tickets, and was holding them hostage for Daddy's girls who had enough \$\$\$ to afford to pay double or triple the price. The Power99 show was booked, which was the biggest rap extravaganza of the year! Tickets sold like wildfire on the first day, and for the next three weeks we had to explain to a steady stream of hundreds of customers that there were NO GOOD SEATS left. An insulting, humiliating scenario repeated itself over and over. The customers (they were almost always black, given the act in question) would stand and stare at the me in disbelief, as if I were a racist scumbag who was lying to them. At least a couple dozen times, they'd turn and look inquiringly at one of my black security guard buddies who usually stood a few feet away. "Yeah man, only nosebleed seats left." Devon or Vance would nod along with me. The customers would eventually realize that I wasn't just being a "white devil," and they'd either buy the shitty tickets and leave...or just leave without buying anything. By that point, I didn't really care.

On at least a couple of occasions, I know that Ticketmaster SCREWED customers out of refunds. When tickets were refunded, the TM asshole handling the transaction would have to cancel out the ticket by section, row, and seat number. Then they'd give the customer their money back. The problem was that with hundreds of terminals spread out all over the Eastern megalopolises, you could count on their being plenty of knucklehead ticket clerks who would accidentally key in the wrong seat numbers and cancel the wrong seats. That meant that the people presenting those seat numbers would not only be unable to get their money back, they'd be suspected of being thieves in league with one of us who had access to the tickets. What a fucking MESS! This actually happened to one of my bandmates when Motörhead cancelled a show!

On occasion, when I worked with a few like-minded supers, we'd intentionally see to it that the ticket machine jammed if the Ticketmaster girl scheduled to work phoned in sick. With the Ticketmaster desk closed, the store ran a helluva lot smoother and we had more time for the customers that were shopping for CDs and other shit. I hear that Pearl Jam and a few other well known bands have tried to stand up to Ticketmaster over the years. Well, more power to them; unfortunately, I suspect that Ticketmaster is so huge, so powerful, and so greedy that they will go on dominating the ticket scene even if a hundred guys like me write columns in mags like this.

PLUG PLUG PLUG: For the last few months, I've been traveling all over the country meeting "the people" by giving book readings at book and record stores and climbing up on stage at bars to read drinking stories or talk about my bowel movements. If you'd like me to consider coming to your burg to peddle books, magazines, and culture, please email me at the address below.

One more thing! For the last couple of months, I've been posting a diary on our website. I update it a couple times a week, and you can visit it at: <http://home.conectiv.net/~whskyreb/index.html> ☺

Thee WHISKEY REBEL
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I. THE BURNING BUSH

Are you people enjoying the next Bush in the White House? BUSH, PART II. It's like some sequel to a bad, hick, "Texas Chainsaw Massacre"-style horror film. "HE'S COME DOWN FROM THE HILLS TO GET HIS REVENGE!" I'm looking forward to the sequel playing out, since I had such a great time with the last one. I mean that, too. Great art flourishes in the face of pure evil. 1988 to 1992 had some great hard rocking, intelligent music, some of the greatest comedy, art, and even a few good movies were made. You know why? Because people were pissed and needed cathartic laughter and anger in their art. That's why the music world is for shit right now. Everyone was happy because their bankrolls were fat. You could be "Livin' La Vida Loca" when your stock options are up three thousand percent. There's no need to Rage Against the Machine when it's a cash machine spitting out an endless supply of Benjamins.

Just wait a bit and we will all be needing anger in our art again, because just about all the same criminals are coming back to the scene of the crime. That's what we are to these criminal fucks. We're just a nation of midnight convenience store clerks with targets for nametags. "Hi. My name is Victim." The heat's off the store and its time to come back and tap the till again. Politicians should be forced by law to wear stockings over their heads. Actually, after that Floriduhh thing, I'm giving our howler monkey, "Forest Gump" electorate too much credit. America going back to Bush is like a rape victim walking back into the biker bar, propping herself up on the pinball machine, and announcing, "In yur' haste, y'all fergot' to fuck my ass. And, I still got three teeth left in my head." The second Bush Administration consists of little more than a bunch of thieving rapists coming back for seconds.

"Wait," someone might say, "that's not true. The Bush Klan is a patriotic institution in this country." Yeah, right. The S&L crisis, Iran-Contra, and the Gulf War — these are a few of my favorite things. I can't wait to see what they're going to give that real American "hero" Ollie North from the spoils grab bag. How about the Drug Czar position? From heroin in the Golden Triangle to coke in Colombia, he sure as fuck knows all about the drug trade. We'll make Bush Jr. the official taste tester. Honestly, though, I've got nothing against cocaine and assault weapons. Those are two of my favorite things. If I could, I would open a store that sold nothing else except firearms and coke by the kilo. But I wouldn't peddle propaganda to the contrary. I mean, just look at the people in the "new administration"; their names are BUSH, DICK, AND COLIN (read COLON). If that doesn't say "prepare to get fucked!" I don't know what does.

Other than a flood of new cocaine and heroin into this country, I can't wait for the next round of divisive smokescreen politics: abortion, gender issues, and burning flags — all that "family values" horseshit. Bring it on. Let's sacrifice a boom economy to keep everybody straight and pregnant under a waving flag. Backwards, 1950's-style, rotten apple pie lies. The Nelson family was just a few hits of acid, some belladonna, and unrequited stardom away from becoming the Manson Family. As far as I'm concerned, you could put a pair of gay abortion doctors wrapping up dead fetuses in American flags in my living room as long as the economy is booming along so that I can make my fucking car payment on time. The Lord and I will hash that one out later. I'll take an exuberant economy with a young, intern-fucking president, thank you very much.

I really don't give a shit about these issues. In any sane society gender issues shouldn't make the front page, or any other page for that matter. Homophobes parading around with "God Hates Fags" or "AIDS from GOD!" signs. The gay and lesbian community countering with "I'm a man, I suck cock. I'm a woman, I eat pussy." Great, can we get on to the real issue of who's fucking me and the rest of the country in the wallet while we're forced to concentrate on these non-issues. Now, combine these issues with the abortion arguments and the lamest of all — flag burning — and you got the greatest diversion since Clinton bombed Iraq at the height of the Monica/Blowjob-gate scandal. The only reason Republicans harp so heavily on "family values" is that with-



WITH
**Richard
Tater**

out that worthless symbolic platform no working class citizen, except maybe the most paranoid S.O.F.-fed defense spending Rambozos, would ever have a solid reason to vote for their party. I've got a simple solution to this whole family values "crisis." Let's combine these three issues into one blanket issue and put it to a vote. Let's just make it illegal to fuck same-sex aborted fetuses wrapped in burning American flags, and then get on with our lives.

While were on the subject of diversionary politics, which is kind of an oxymoron, I'm perturbed at Bush's choice of a running mate; as if he had a choice in the matter. We all know that Dick is a sort of Cardinal Richelieu, but let's just pretend we could pick a dream running mate for G.W. I would suggest bringing back Dan Quayle, especially if Dick's ticker kicks out on him. Can you imagine that? If politics are nothing more than a dog and pony show to keep us occupied and entertained, that would be the comedy "dream team." With those two chuckle monsters at the helm, the Government could slip anything past us. "What, a Viet Nam style war in Columbia under the guise of drug enforcement? I was too busy laughing to notice. The Death Penalty for D.U.I. drivers, I couldn't see it coming through the tears of hilarity. The letter 'Z' really did become illegal. I thought that was another joke." If we had Dan Quayle as VP, I would go out and buy stock in the parent holding companies of the adult undergarment industry. Other than the arms and privatized prison industries, those would be the only stocks rising in value as we would be shitting ourselves with laughter everyday during the news. We still may be shitting ourselves but more likely in fear.

You people are going to miss Clinton. I miss him already. You're going miss only having to worry about what intern he was sticking his cock or cigar into. Remember the not-so-distant past. That lovely phrase, "I don't recall" being repeated over and over again by people with their left hand in the air and their right hand on a Bible that should have burst into flames upon their touch. When this next group of fun-loving yahoos has to face


HIT SQUAD

Senate Judiciary Committees, y'all are gonna' miss forty million dollar blowjob investigations.

II. LOCAL PREDICTIONS


Here I'll do something I rarely do, and put on my Nostradumbass hat and give you a view into the future. As I've harped on before, my shit hometown is Riverdale, CA. In the not so distant past you may have remembered one of our finest and swinest (now ex-Officer T.W.) beating the shit out of an illegal alien following a car chase. This, along with other similar incidents, caused the media to pawn off officer aggression as an instantaneous post traumatic stress disorder-like syndrome. hilariously, cops were sent to sensitivity training courses and, low and behold, they still kick the shit out of people following intense situations.

To show you how fucked up this town is, Officer W. was this-fucking-close to being reinstated following a rubber stamp kangaroo court. Unfortunately, the violent fuckwit allegedly beat his "significant other", barricaded himself in an armed stand-off with officers, got 5150'd, later got a DUI and beat the shit out of the arresting officer. With a multiplicity of felonies hanging over his head, it's only a matter of time before this fuck caps himself, or more than likely takes a whole bunch of people out beforehand. So you heard it hear first. It may have happened by the time this article comes out given the bi-monthly nature of the mag. My friends and I have an office pool. I have his gun-fest-freak-out slated for early May. See you in the mass murder funny pages, T.. ⊕



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july 19th kansas city
july 20th little rock
july 21st texarkana,ar timebomb cafe
july 22nd lake charles,la dagostino's
july 23rd new orleans dlxe tavern
july 24th birmingham,al
july 25th atlanta
july 26th chatanooga
july 27th columbia,sc newbrookland tavern
july 28th asheville,nc
july 29th erie,pa @ the sst w/small brown bike**
july 30th cleveland/euclid tavern**
july 31st chicago**
aug 1st dubuque,ia **
aug 2nd mpls w/ dillinger four** bar
aug 3rd mpls w/ dillinger four** all ages
aug 4th milwaukee w/ dillinger four**
aug 5th iowa city w/ dillinger four**
aug 6th haul fuckin ass!
aug 7th olympia,wa w/the bangs
aug 8th portland w/scared of chaka
aug 9th eureka,ca/the vista w/scared of chaka
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THE ALMIGHTY TOP TENS

SHITLIST

Jeff Bale

- 1) BEAT ANGELS - "Unhappy Hour" CD
- 2) DIMESTORE HALOES - "Long Ride to Nowhere" CD
- 3) DOGS - "Bite Back" LP [France, 77-8]
- 4) HANGMEN - "Metallic I.O.U." CD
- 5) HEADWOUND - "The Early Years" CD
- 6) JOHN'S CHILDREN - "Jagged Time Lapse" CD
- 7) PAGANS - "Shit Street" CD
- 8) RICHMOND SLUTS - CD
- 9) NIKKI SUDDEN - "The Last Bandit" 2xCD
- 10) TRAVOLTAS - "Teenbeat" CD

Alan Wright

- 1) WHITE STRIPES - "De Stijle" CD
- 2) V/A - "Sympathetic Sounds of Detroit" CD
- 3) PAGANS - "Shit Street/Pink Album" CDs
- 4) PROLES - "Thought Crimes" CD
- 5) NOW TIME DELEGATION - "Watch For Today" CD
- 6) CRAMPS - "Fetishism" LP
- 7) FIRST ALERT - "Thrills & Spills Of 48 Hours" LP
- 8) ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT - "Group Sounds" CD
- 9) DOGS - "Fed Up!" CD
- 10) SONNY FLAHERTY & THE MARK 5 - "Hey Conductor" CD
(and lots of WHO bootlegs!)

Dimitri Monroe

- 1) CHEETAH CHROME - live at Lili's

- 2) DAVE KUSWORTH - "English Disco" CD
- 3) TRASH BRATS - "American Disaster" CD
- 4) NASH KATO - "Debutante" CD
- 5) BEBE BUELL - "Normal Girl" CD
- 6) SONNY VINCENT - "Parallax in Wonderland" CD
- 7) SCARECROWS - "Class A RockNRoll" CD
- 8) BLONDE AND BLUE - "Mad as Hell" CD
- 9) DAVID BOWIE - "Bowie at the Beeb" CD
- 10) BLACK HALOS - "The Violent Years" CD

Adam X

- 1) BLACK HALOS - "The Violent Years" CD
- 2) TSAR - "King of the School" CDEP
- 3) HANGMEN - "Metallic I.O.U." CD
- 4) BRIEFS - "Hit After Hit" CD
- 5) PLASMATICS - "Beyond the Valley of 1984" CD
- 6) HIVES - "Veni Vidi Vicious" CD
- 7) RICHMOND SLUTS - CD
- 8) FIGGS - "Sucking in Stereo" CD
- 9) HYBRID - "Chan Jam Live" CD
- 10) CHURCH OF CONFIDENCE - "Livin' on Crime" CD

Jimi Cheetah

- 1) RAMONES - s/t LP
- 2) RAMONES - "Leave Home" LP
- 3) RAMONES - "Rocket To Russia" LP
- 4) RAMONES - "Road To Ruin" LP
- 5) RAMONES - "End Of The Century" LP
- 6) RAMONES - "Pleasant Dreams" LP
- 7) RAMONES - "Subterranean Jungle" LP

- 8) RAMONES - "Too Tough To Die" LP
- 9) RAMONES - "Animal Boy" LP
- 11) RAMONES - "Halfway To Sanity" LP

Brett Mathews

- 1) AMERICAN NIGHTMARE - "Background Music"
- 2) AMERICAN NIGHTMARE - Both CDEPs
- 3) NOFX - "Surfer" 7"
- 4) AFI/LOOSE CHANGE split 7"
- 5) Realizing that NOFX's "The Decline" is the greatest song ever written..
- 6) ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES "Blow in the Wind" CD
- 7) SHARK ATTACK "Blood in the Water" 7"
- 8) PITCH BLACK/ENEMIES Split CD
- 9) DIVIT/EVERYDAY VICTORY Split CD
- 10) SAN GERONIMO CDEP

Dave Johnson

- 1) JAWBREAKER - "24 Hour Revenge Therapy" CD
- 2) BURNING AIRLINES - "Identikit" CD
- 3) PINHEAD GUNPOWDER - Live Mp3 set
- 4) HOT SNAKES - "Automatic Midnight" CD
- 5) STOOGES - "Raw Power" CD
- 6) ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT - "Group Sounds" CD
- 7) ONE TIME ANGELS "Sound of a Restless City" CD
- 8) BUILT TO SPILL - "There's Nothing Wrong With Love" CD
- 9) THE PATTERN
- 10) SULTANS - "Ghost Ship" CD



Your fearless leaders through the vast and daunting catacombs of rock 'n' roll recordings. Just so you know who to blame when you plunk down your hard earned cash on a slab of plastic, run home as fast as your little punk legs will carry you and spin it anxiously, only to find it completely, totally and indisputably sucks: Athena Dread (AD), Cyco Logic Loco (CLL), Tina Lucchesi (TL), Jeremy Cool (JER), Brett Mathews (BAM), Jimi Cheetah (JC), Sara Bellum (SB), Jeff Bale (JB), Dimitri Monroe (DJM), Jami Wolf (JAW), Ramsey Kanaan (RK), Sammy The Mick (STM), Mark Devito (MD), Adam X (X), Mitch Cardwell (MC), Jimmy Shields (JS), Chris Jaluska (CJ) and John Cattivera (JDC)

SHITLIST

3rd Man In



3RD MAN IN "Forget What You Know" CD EP

Five tracks of speedy pogo punk, with enough chops and changes to keep it interesting. Sort of like a cross between the U.K.

SUBS and one of the more vociferous emo type bands that abound these days. A pretty decent effort. (RK)

(AVD/8370 West Cheyenne, Box 109-22/Las Vegas, NV 89129)

999 "English Wipeout" CD

999 were always a fucking great band that knew how to rock and stitch together a good tune, and they put 99% of the punk/garage/snotty wankers that have followed them to shame. Herein you'll find two super live sets, recorded in 1980 and 1977, including all the hits, up front and personal. Great sound, superb performances, classic songs. (RK)

(Overground/john@overgroundrecords.co.uk)



ABOVE THIS WORLD "End Of Days" CD

This side project featuring members of HOODS and SWORN VENGEANCE is a thunderous attack of heavy hardcore. Crunchy guitars,

nihilistic lyrics, and a carpet-bombing of mosh. Fans of COLD AS LIFE and PUNISHMENT should pick this up. The artwork, it must be noted, is amazing. (STM) (Thorpe/PO Box 2007/Upper Darby, PA 19082)

THE ACTION TIME "Versus The World" CD

What a bunch of artsy fartsy cool kids! This is mainly style over substance, with an overall approach that smacks of third generation MURDER CITY DEVILS. Another lame release on a generally lame label. (JC) (Southern/PO Box 577375/Chicago, IL 60657)

AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY

AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY

"Nothing New For Trash Like You" CD

This is the second great record I've reviewed in

these pages with this title - the first being BUENO. While BUENO served up their politics with a melodic SoCal sound, A.A.A. here gather their singles, comp tracks, and rare stuff from 1992 to the present, with their signature ska-as-fuck punk. And a glorious collection it is too. (RK) (Sub City/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)

AGE OF RUIN "Black Sands Of The Hourglass" CD

Screamy, metallic hardcore. I don't really like this type of music, but they certainly seem competent and their overall aesthetic is pretty cool. For punky metalheads and metal-damaged punks. (JC) (no label or address listed)



AIRBOMB "Lookout!" CD

Good, solid, brickwall punk offering what I believe is a "newish" punker band from the UK. In the early 80s, this would have

been considered par for the course, along with the likes of ABRASIVE WHEELS, RIOT SQUAD, ONE WAY SYSTEM et al. I guess these days this would be considered "streetpunk" - a de-CLASHed (or pre-CLASH) RANCID sound perhaps. The kind of band that would get signed to Hellcat. (RK) (Retch, distributed by Cargo)

ALICE COOPER "Billion Dollar Babies" double CD

It's about time they started reissuing expanded, remastered versions of the early ALICE COOPER albums, even if they're inexplicably starting near the end and working backwards. This was the second-to-last album featuring the original band, and along with a remastered version of the album you also get a second disc of outtakes and great live stuff from the same period. The original packaging is restored, and it comes with a nice, fat booklet. (AW) (Warner Brothers-Rhino/www.rhino.com)



ALKALINE TRIO "From Here To Infirmary" CD

This is going to be huge (if it isn't already). The world (especially the breathless teenagers) have been waiting for the new JAWBREAKER. Me

reckons they have arrived. Great songwriting, punchy melodies, sublimely played and produced. (RK) (Vagrant/2118 Wilshire Blvd. #361/Santa Monica, CA 90403)



ANDY G. & THE ROLLER KINGS s/t CD EP

The Fabulous ANDY G is back! The guy hasn't missed a step, because this is one hot disc. The ROLLER KINGS pick up right where

LOS PRIMOS left off, beefing up the sound a bit, but the great horns and that trademark guitar swagger are still present. (MC) (www.sympathyrecords.com)

ANNALISE "Too Much Music & Too Many Bands" CD EP

Three tracks of brash, snotty, poppy punk. If you can envisage J CHURCH on speed with a snarly, surly Brit singer (it's OK, they're allowed to have British accents, being from the UK), you'll be close enough. Good stuff. (RK) (Boss Tuneage/PO Box 19550/London, SW11 1FG/ENGLAND)

ANNA & THE PSYCHOMEN "No Please Not Me!!!" CD

By-the-book garage punk/pop from Italy. Anna has really cool vocals, and the band surfs it up at times. My favorite song was "You Really Got Me Baby, But You're a Nazi", in which Anna is distraught over having to dump her big-dicked Nazi boyfriend. You get the point. (MC) (Amp/92 Kenilworth Avenue South/Hamilton, Ontario/CANADA)



ANN BERETTA "New Union Old Glory" CD

This is one of those bands that I'd heard a lot about, but had yet to check out. The generally write catchy songs that seem to fall somewhere in between

those of AVAIL and PINHEAD GUNPOWDER. It's a little too clean and predictable for my taste, but I can see why this band was able to garner a following. (JC) (Lookout/3264 Adeline Street/Berkeley, CA 94703)

ANTHEM EIGHTY EIGHT
"Q: And Progress? A: And Progress." CD
Raging, pissed-off, thick chugga chugga hardcore. The music chunters Along at a

suitably speedy and bottom-heavy pace. The screaming, hoarse vocals get a little bit much after the first couple of minutes, but maybe I'm just showing my age. (RK) (Schematics, distributed by No Idea, bless em)



ANTIFREEZE

"Four Letter Words" CD

These youngsters have got the melodic SoCal pop-punk sound down surprisingly well, and even make songs about girls sound fresh. I mean, it took BLINK 182 ten years to get this good, and virtually everyone else never made it close. Great vocals, melodic layered guitars, and what I presume will be the hits have that extra dash of keyboard which propelled BLINK to the top of the charts. (RK) (Kung Fu/PO Box 3061/Seal Beach, CA 90740)

APPLICATORS

"What's Your Excuse" CD

Rough and tumble girly punk with big pop hooks. It would be great if the APPLICATORS and the EYELINERS did a split on Lipstick records. A real cool record and band that everyone should check out. (JC) (Cornerstone R.A.S./PO Box 234, 6235E. Spring Street/Long Beach, CA 90808)

ARAB ON RADAR

"Soak The Saddle" CD

This CD is nuts, man, totally noisy, fucked up, and pretty damn wonderful. I'm not sure what to compare them to. Maybe if somebody put JESUS LIZARD and CAPTAIN BEEFHART into a blender, it would come out sounding something like this. Worth the trip. (JC) (Skin Graft/PO Box 257546/Chicago, IL 60625)

ARMCHAIR MARTIAN

"Monsters Always Scream" CD

These dudes do a fine HÜSKER DÜ meets ALL in their more melancholy moments double-date. I'm a sucker for that warm, rich, open-chord sound. Songs of love and loss don't often sound this good. (RK) (My Records/PO Box 41730/Santa Barbara, CA 93140)

ATARIS

"End Is Forever" CD

The latest ATARIS disc sees them entering the big leagues. They've honed the SoCal melodic HC pop sound down to the

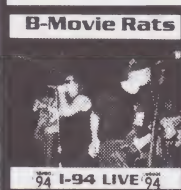
essentials, and filled the space with blistering melodies, harmonies, and some exquisite songwriting. Mix the best parts of NOFX, FACE TO FACE, and NO USE FOR A NAME, and you have that quintessential Fat sound...except that they're on Kung Fu! (RK) (Kung Fu/920N Citrus Avenue/Hollywood, CA 90038)



ATOM & HIS PACKAGE

"Redefining Music" CD

The third full-length from the genius and his sequencer. Comparisons to DEVO or THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS are somewhat trite, and don't do the man and his music justice, but it'll get you into the right ballpark. While not possessing as many instant classics as the previous discs, the songwriting has a new depth and consistency which us mere mortals can merely marvel at, and enjoy the fuck out of. Record of the year. (RK) (Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)



B-Movie Rats

B-MOVIE RATS

"I-94 Live" CD

This CD captures the B-MOVIE RATS live in Detroit, fourteen songs full of fast and trashy punk with a raw recording. The entire live set is included, with lots of banter and breaks in the action, so you can tell a good time was had by all in attendance. For fans only. (MC) (I-94/PO Box 44763/Detroit, MI 48244)

BANTAM ROOSTER

"Mexican Leather" 7"

A stripped-down blues-meets-punk rock ethos from this excellent two-man combo. New drummer Mike Alonso joins with singer/guitarist Thomas J. Potter to produce some fine rawk, while producer Jim Diamond contributes some organ and sax to the proceedings. (AW) (Big Neck/www.bigneckrecords.com)



BANTAM ROOSTER

"Fuck All Y'all" CD

"Fuck All Y'all" if y'all can't dig this. BANTAM ROOSTER is another two-piece Detroit combo, and this is their best material to date. This is totally great

crud-rock scuzz. Lots of screaming, shaking and wailing, coupled with a great recording sound by Jim Diamond. (MC)

REVIEWS

(www.sympathyrecords.com)

BEAT ANGELS

"Unhappy Hour" CD

The second full-length from this glammed-out Arizona power pop band who remind me of a more wasted, decadent version of early CHEAP TRICK. With bigger melodic hooks than most underground or commercial pop groups, and guitars louder than those of many punk bands, it's impossible not to be seduced by these underappreciated rockers. Add superior lyrics and songwriting, like those displayed on great tracks like "Grow Up" and "The Most Beautiful Loser in Town", and you've got an absolute winner. (JB) (Epiphany/1000 E. Apache #206/Tempe, AZ 85281)

BELLVUE

"To Be Somebody" CD

This sounds just like you'd expect from the line-up, which features members of D-GENERATION and QUICKSAND and is produced by Bryce Goggin (PAVEMENT, SPACEHOG, BREEDERS). It's aggressive, heavy, thick, and swirling with dirt, yet is also delicate at times. Track 3 is a slamming rendition of the ROLLING STONES "Heartbreaker." (X) (GoldenSeal/PO Box 6637/Long Island City, NY 11106)



BENJAMINS

"The Art Of Disappointment" CD

At their best, the BENJAMINS sound like a more muscular version of the current weak, emasculated incarnation of

the MR T EXPERIENCE, or perhaps the more poppy elements of the AKLALINE TRIO. At their worst, they fall into the same, sappy, vapid pop that the aforementioned 'EXPERIENCE are currently mired in. I still can't decide whether the good outweighs the nondescript. (RK) (Drive-Thru/PO Box 55234/Sherman Oaks, CA 94143)



BETTER THAN 1000

"Self Worth" CD

Cappo and company do what they do exceptionally well, but expect n surprises. Polished, mature hardcore that gives fans of BT1000

SHITLIST

what they want. (STM)
(Soulforce/Apartado de Correos
#18.199/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)

BETTY BLOWTORCH "Get Off" CD

Way trashy r'n'r with a nice loud dirty guitar sound. All but one of the band members are hot babes, most of their songs have overtly sexual themes, they manage to generate some catchy back-and-forth vocals, and the music is aggressive and fairly obnoxious, so it's a bit of a mystery why they're not more famous outside of L.A. A sleazier, less metallic version of L7, as titles like "Shut Up and Fuck" and "Party Til Ya Puke" might suggest. (JB)
(Foil/PO Box 4231/Laguna Beach, CA 92652)



BITE

"Off the Hook" CD

The sound of this CD does more harm to the band than the writing does. Basically, the guitars lead the way and the rest follow. Quick

and quirky two-minute tunes on the cusp of pop or punk, but really garnering neither. To me, this band is just a lot more dangerous live. (X)

(DirtyDisc/594 Valencia Street, Suite 10/San Francisco, CA 94110)

BLACK JAX

"Hanging Out" CD

Pretty wounded. This SoCal band from the mid-80s had a bit of a New York sound to them. This is all unreleased stuff, but I'm not sure if it ever needed to be. The packaging sucks, the liner notes don't make sense, and why are certain tracks labelled as "bonus tracks" if they're all unreleased. (JC)

(Workin' Stiphs/PO Box 6480/Mesa, AZ 85216)

BLOWTOPS

"Blood And Tar" 10" EP

This is one stellar piece of lo-fi damaged punk rock. This shit is raw, dirty, and evil, and I love it. It reminds me of the REATARDS and the CLONE DEFECTS. On the mighty fine Big Neck label. (MC)

(Big Neck/PO Box 8144/Reston, VA 20195)

BLUE THINGS

s/t (Rewind/BMG)

It's about time someone did this, a legit-from-mastertapes reissue of the legendary BLUE THINGS' 1966 RCA album. It's a folk-rock masterpiece filled with melancholy vocals, ringing 12-string guitars, and a cool early BEATLES/BYRDS/DYLAN vibe throughout. Also added as bonus tracks are some non-LP singles, including the wigged-out psych, acid-tinged "Orange Rooftops Of Your Mind". (AW)

(Rewind-BMG/no address listed)

The Boils



THE BOILS/DISORDERLY CONDUCT "split 7" EP

The BOILS play two songs of great old school punk rock, "Facing the Dawn" is fast and furious, while

"Eye's On the Floor" is more Oi-type streetpunk. DISORDERLY CONDUCT also has two songs: "Two Eyes of Elder" is traditional Oi singalong, and "Port City Streets" is fast-paced streetpunk. Both bands are really good. (CLL)

(Squigtone/PO Box 38/Newton, NJ 07860)

BOMBSHELL ROCKS

"Cityrats & Alleycats" CD

The Swedes have always been the consummate copyists. From the days of DISCHARGE-influenced thrash, to the MILLENCOLINS and NO FOR AN ANSWERS taking the SoCal sound, we now have BOMBSHELL ROCKS taking the whole CLASH/RANCID angle to new heights. This is a great fucking record that rocks HARD and has melody, power, and passion. RANCID fantasize about sounding this good. (RK)
(Burning Heart/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)



BOUNCING SOULS

"How I Spent My Summer Vacation" CD

A band that plays with a lot of character and always seems to put a lot into everything that they do.

This CD is full of the big bouncy hooks and heartfelt lyrics that the band is famous for. Although I am sad to see longtime SOULS drummer Shal leave the ranks, new drummer Michael solidly fills the role. (JC)
(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)



BOVVER WONDERLAND

"Forgotten Hero's" CD

I was actually surprised when I got this CD, since I didn't know this band was

even still around. Fourteen songs of good old-fashioned singalong drink-yer-fuckin'-beer punk rock. It seems like every song is about beer, so why not pick up a couple cases of PBR while you're out buying it? (CLL)
(Radio/PO Box 1452/Sonoma, CA 95476)

BOY HITS CAR CD EP

This fits right in with the rest of the garbage that seems to follow in the wake of bands like INCUBUS, LIMP BIZKIT, and RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE. BOY HITS CAR feels very comfortable being there, too. They borrow beats from one and guitars from the other, then add lyrics similar to those of the ever-so-expressive KORN. The only ray of sunshine is that these guys are very competent musicians; now all they need to do is figure out what exactly it is that they're doing. (CJ)



BROther's KEEPER

"Fantasy Killer" CD

There have been many heated debates about Mike Ski's crow-esque vocals, but fuck all that because there is so much more to talk about than the vocal

stylings. The music is powerful, the lyrics are thoughtful, and the attention to detail in every aspect of this album is immaculate. This band is truly fearless. (STM)
(Trustkill/23 Farm Edge Lane/Tinton Falls, NJ 07724)



BURNT BY THE SUN "S/T" CD

Technical, chaotic metalcore. A poor man's CONVERGE? Maybe, but this album is still impressive. The guitar work

is frantic and brilliant, perhaps like that of DEADGUY. Buy this. (STM)
(Relapse@relapse.com)

CAUSEY WAY

"Causey Vs. Everything" CD

Another CAUSEY WAY CD, even though I'm still recovering from the last one. "Vs. Everything" isn't nearly as abraisive as the first album, but it's more musically varied (the first couple of tracks are even in Spanish), artsy, and indie rockish. I prefer the freakout bits that they do, but it's still pretty cool all the way through. (JC)

(Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)

REVIEWS



THE CHERRY VALENCE s/t CD

This one had me worried: a North Carolina rock band with two drummers. Well, fears be gone, because this debut rocks from start to finish. The CHERRY VALENCE sound similar to the TIGHT BROS FROM WAY BACK WHEN, with plenty of drive and screeching guitar licks. Shake your ass. (MC)

(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

CHOCOLATE WATCHBAND

"At The Love-In Live! In Person At Cavestomp!" CD

To be honest I had my doubts about how good this would be, but I did like both the Cavestomp MONKS and STANDELLS releases. Although the WATCHBAND studio reunion CD from last year was a bit of a disappointment, here in a live setting they strip it all back down to the basics and play all the faves from the 60s with a lot of enthusiasm and energy. Songs like "Don't Need Your Lovin'" and "Are You Gonna Be There?" are fuzzed-out and reckless sounding. (AW)

(Cavestomp/www.cavestomp.com)

CINECYDE

"You Live A Lie, You're Gonna Die" CD

A collection of singles and EPs recorded in the 1977-81 period by this highly underrated Detroit band. The singer's unique voice works well on the slower art-damaged songs like "Gutless Radio" and "My Doll". The faster numbers like "Radiation Sickness" and "I Think I'm Losing My Mind Again" betray a strong STOOGES/MC5 influence, while P.F. SLOAN and DAVE CLARK 5 covers show off their 60's pop influences. (AW)

(Hate/Via Videesch 11/00152 Roma/ITALY)



COCKNOOSE

"White Trash Messiahs" CD

Your next beer-soaked BBQ has a soundtrack. Cocknoose are some mean motherfuckers, playing

tough punk songs about guns, drinking, and being trash. This is the tornado that will destroy your trailer. C.O.S. endorsed. (MC)

(Steel Cage/PO Box 29247/Philadelphia, PA 19126)



COME ONS

"Whatcha Got/Needle In a Haystack" 7"

Another amazing Detroit band. The COME ONS play awesome 60's soul with great female vocals, a

perfect companion for the DETROIT COBRAS. There's lots of cool keyboards, and a fantastic cover of "Needle In a Haystack" by The VELVEETTES. (MC)

(www.sympathyrecords.com)

CONFLICT

"Only Stupid Bastards Help Go Kart Records" CD

This is one of them sampler thingies - one track from each of the ten CONFLICT CDs that Go-Kart are rereleasing. Along with CRASS, CONFLICT really defined anarcho-punk and uncompromising political hardcore. I haven't listened to them in close on fifteen years, and they still sound angry and downright rocking. Praise Bakunin for reissues. (RK)

(Go Kart/PO Box 20, Prince Street Station/New York, NY 10012)



CRIMSON SWEET

"Foil Beach" CD EP

A pretty solid release from this female-fronted group. The first tune is a drop-dead rocker that sounds quite a bit like the SAINTS.

The remaining four tunes are OK, but pretty bland in comparison to the killer opener. (MC)

(Slow Gold Zebra/ www.crimsonsweet.com)

CRISIS

"We're All Jews & Germans" double CD

This is an anthology of sorts containing their three singles, mini-album, and a bunch of demos and live stuff. It's been out for awhile, but isn't easy to find. With a sound akin to early WIRE, they cranked out minimalist-yet-catchy punk with strong political lyrics. Really great stuff. (AW)

(Ouroubouros Music/Unit 17 Seager Building, Brookhill Road/London SE8 4HL/ENGLAND)



d.b.s.

"Forget Everything You Know" CD

Five new tracks which take these young Canucks further away from pop-punk territory, and more

into the experimental, jagged emo environs. Imagine an off-kilter HOT WATER MUSIC with keyboards, or FUGAZI at their tuneful best, and you'll get some idea of where they seem to be heading. At its finest this is great driving rock, but they don't always pull it off. (RK)

(Ache/PO Box 138, 1001 W. Broadway #101/Vancouver, BC V6H 4E4/CANADA)

DARK AGES/GRIMM LTD.

split 7" EP

Raunchy 60's punk from two obscure New Zealand combos. Both draw comparisons to the PRETTY THINGS, DOWNLINERS SECT, and New Zealand's own CHANTS R&B. The DARK AGES give us covers of "Tomorrow/s Gonna Be Another Day" and "Cadillac", while GRIMM LTD are represented by "One Ugly Child" and "Keep Your Big Mouth Shut". Cool stuff. (AW)

(Action/www.records.co.nz)

DEAD MOON

"Trash & Burn" CD

A brand-spanking new CD from Fred, Toody, and Andrew. It's a vast departure for them, as this is super-slick with lots of sampling and guest appearances by turntablists and rappers. Not! This sounds like every other DEAD MOON release: raw, unbridled rock with screaming, angst-filled vocals and hooks galore. (AW)

(Empty/www.emptyrecords.com)

DEVIATES

"Time Is The Distance" CD

A chip off the old block. Nothing new here, but another slab of well-executed SoCal melodic hardcore from the hit factory that brought you PENNYWISE, the OFFSPRING, and more. You like them, you'll like this. Guaranteed. (RK)

(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90026)



DEVOTCHKAS

"Annihilation EP" CD

Fuck, yeah! Fast paced singalong female punk rock. There's no riot grrl p.c. stuff here, just real straight-to-the-point old

school punk. The music itself has a distinct EXPLOITED influence, the vocals are tougher but a bit like SNAP-HER, and they include a cover of the 4 SKINS' "Sorry". (CLL)

(Punkcore/PO Box 916/Middle Island, NY 11953)

DIABOLICAL EXPLOITS

s/t CD

There's pretty much something for everyone with this release.

Generally, this has a "Fat Wreck" sound, but there are definite tinges of ska-punk, early UK punk, pop punk (they even cover SCREECHING WEASEL), and even a few eerie

SHITLIST



MISFITS-style songs. Great sound, nice packaging, but the music is only so-so. (MC)
(Substandard/PO Box 310/Berkeley, CA 94704)

DILEMMAS

"In Color" 7" EP

Some fine garage pop from a Brit combo that was new to my ears. They kind of remind me of the PRISONERS, which is a good thing to be reminded of. They also have a big Hammond organ sound which is reminiscent of bands like the SMALL FACES. Three mod-rocking songs indeed. (AW)
(Butterfly/www.butterfly-records.com)

DILS

"Class War" CD

The DILS were among the best of the early wave of punk bands in San Francisco. This CD contains their classic 7" on the What label, featuring "I Hate the Rich" and "You're Not Blank", along with several songs from a live show recorded in 1980. Alas, the latter material suffers from an exceedingly poor mix, so much so that it completely fails to do justice to the band's live power. (JB)
(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)



DIMESTORE HALOES

"Long Ride To Nowhere" CD

One of the final releases by this highly-regarded band. As always, these guys pump out some solid

punk'n'roll with lots of hooks, so they've always been able to please the pop-punkers as well. A fine last stand. (MC)
(Pelado/521 W.Wilson #C103/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

THE DIRTSHAKES

"The Kicks Are Alright!" 10"

The debut platter from these four shitheads - '77 garage punk with lots of cool riffs and a booming bass. It kind of reminded me of the ANGRY SAMOANS. Alien Snatch Records always goes all out with the thick vinyl, and this release also comes with a full-color poster. (MC)
(Alien Snatch/Morikeweg 1/74199 Untergruppenbach/GERMANY)

DONOVAN'S BRAIN

"Tiny Crustacean Light Show" CD

A very strong psych-rock release. It's good that they can go way out there, yet still retain strong melodies. DONOVAN'S BRAIN have cool-sounding guitars that seemingly come at you from every direction. (MC)
(www.gethip.com)

DOUGLASS KINGS

"Inc." CD

The CD sleeve looks like some techno bullshit, so I was wary about this one. Not surprisingly, most of the music is pretty repetitive, slow, and boring. I might describe it as New Wave, but that might be considered a compliment and this sucks! (CLL)
(Douglass Kings/PO Box 577909/Chicago, IL 60657)



DUANE PETERS & THE HUNNS

"Tickets To Heaven" CD

This is a brilliant retro record - a great reconstruction of '77 British

punk. The riffs, the vocal inflections, it's all there. If you loved the SEX PISTOLS, SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS, and their compadres, you ought to really enjoy this. (RK)
(Disaster - 9005/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



DYNAMITE BOY

"Somewhere In America" CD

Their second full-length, and boy, have they matured fast. From being also-rans

in the melodic SoCal stakes, this record must make them a contender. Vocal harmonies to die for, and an appropriately muscular twin guitar attack of the type that FACE TO FACE only wish they could master these days. You'll even dig the guitar solos. (RK)
(Fearless/13772 Goldenwest Street #545/Westminster, CA 92683)



EASY ACTION

s/t CD

This is the debut CD by John Brannon's (ex-NEGATIVE APPROACH and LAUGHING HYENAS) new band Not surprisingly, the ten quick and dirty tunes here rock pretty damn hard with heavy guitars and tons of vocal snarl. The "rawk" crew definitely ought to check this one out. (MC)
(Reptilian/403 S.Broadway/Baltimore, MD 21231)

EMBARASSMENT

"Blister Pop" CD

Fans seeking an introduction to this enigmatic Kansas punk/art/pop/wave band would be best served by their two disc compilation "Heyday." But this, collection of archival live recordings compliments that. Instead of their better-known tunes like "Sex Drive", you get lots of hyper-pop originals and covers of songs by the SEEDS, BEATLES, BUDDY HOLLY, ROY ORBISON, and the STOOGES. (AW)
(My Pal God/47 Hardy Drive/Princeton, NJ 08540)



ENSIGN

"The Price Of Progression" CD

Fast hardcore that maintains a heavy beat. It falls somewhere between A.F.I.'s early work and

STRIFE's later work. Not too metal, not too punk. (STM)

(Nitro/7071 Warner Avenue F, PMB 736/Huntington Beach, CA 92647)

FABULOUS SHOCKWAVES/IAN & THE BARNETTS

split 7" EP

Okay, so I'm a sucker for a record with cute chicks doing the pin-up thing on the cover. That said, and boss cover aside, both of these combos play cool instro surf with losta tasty surf licks and a bouncy beat. Endorsed by none other than DEKE DICKERSON, so you know it's primo stuff. (AW)
(Sonic Boom/20720 S.E. 192nd Street/Renton, WA 98058)

FACE TO FACE

"Standards & Practices" CD

I'm not really sure what the point of this is. Ten pretty faithful renditions of songs by the SMITHS, POGUES, PIXIES, PSYCHEDELIC FURS, RAMONES, SUGAR, FUGAZI, INXS and JAWBREAKER. I guess this is for the dedicated fan only. If you're looking for some good covers, check out both Vagrant "Before You Were Punk" compilations. (RK)
(Lady Luck/Vagrant Records/2118 Wilshire Blvd #361/Santa Monica, CA 90403)

FAHNENFLUCHT

"Beissteflex" CD

I've really got no business reviewing this disc, since it's hardcore/punk and it's German. It's produced pretty well, but for all I know they're singing about bridal showers. Even though I get the feeling that some Fatherland pride is involved, it sounds cool.

(X)
(Suppenkazpers Noize Imperium/Postfach
411154/55068 Mainz/GERMANY)

FARAQUET

"The View From The Tower" CD

Stellar math rock from Dischord's high flying FARAQUET. Enegetic intrumentation and passionate vocals. It reminds me a bit of DON CABALLERO, with some occasional leanings towards the MINUTEMEN (most heavily on "Song For Friends To Me"). (JC)
(Dischord/3819 Beecher Street
NW/Washington, DC 20007)



FARTZ

"N.W.T.O." 7" EP

Yes, this is the same FARTZ from the 1980s, and they're still playing killer fast hardcore punk. The band again features Blain Cook,

former singer of the ACCUSED, so they've still got that same intense voice. Four songs in all, including a cover of "Iron Fist" by MOTORHEAD. Great music and excellent cover art. (CLL)

(Transparent/6759 Transparent
Drive/Clarkston, MI 48346)



FIREWORKS

"Off The Air" CD

Dallas' great FIREWORKS caught live on the radio. Fourteen trashy blues-punk songs that would definitely appeal to any OBLIVIANS

fan, and "Fire Engine Lady" is a total killer. Includes members of BLACKTOP and '68 COMEBACK. (MC)

(Au-Go-Go/GPO Box 542d/Melbourne,
Victoria 3001/AUSTRALIA)

FIRST ALERT FIRST ALERT

"Thrills & Spills Of 48 Hours Just Before She undresses Herself" LP

I got turned onto these guys by Byron at Singles Going Steady, and they're my fave new Japanese band. Amazingly catchy mod-powerpop with hints of the WHO, JAM, CHORDS, PLIMSOULS, BUZZCOCKS, and probably others. Their songs are super-infectious and their lyrics are rather obtuse, to say the least, but the whole thing rocks plain and simple. (AW)

(Time Bomb/Toporo 51 Bldg./2-18-18 Nishi-shinsaibashi/Chuo-ku, Osaka 542-0086/JAPAN)

FLIP-TOPS/EVERYDAY SINNERS

split 7" EP

A double shot of loud guitar punk. The FLIP-TOPS offer two short and snotty punk rockers that got me going. EVERYDAY SINNERS have a more twin guitar, NASHVILLE PUSSY-type attack. The former win this battle hands down, as their tunes are as good as anything else out there. (MC)

(Corndaddy, no address)

FORGOTTEN REBELS

"Nobody's Heroes" CD

This latest release from one of Canada's most famous punk bands is the best release they've had since their 1986 "Pride & Disgrace" LP. Fourteen short/fast/obnoxious punk tunes with some glam mixed in. Features a great cover of the AVENGERS' "American In Me" (which sounds even more cynical sung by a Canadian) along with originals like "Highschool Hookers", "New Look", and "Ready To Beat U". (AW)

(OPM/Box 227, Station P/Toronto, Ontario
M5R 1M6/CANADA)

FORTY-FIVES/EVERYDAY SINNERS

"Sing" split 7"

Two cool bands that blast out primal rock and roll. There's no spit and polish here, just the sort of down and dirty sounds that we like. Another fine example of bands stuck in crappy little towns in the middle of nowhere who nevertheless manage to make great music. (JC)

(Corn Daddy/624 S. Higgins/Missoula, MT
56801)



FRENZAL RHOMB

"Shut Your Mouth" CD

This band is seriously huge in Australia. Y'know, like BLINK 182 or the OFFSPRING. And they deserve to be massive

over here too. They seamlessly mix that BLINK sound with the brains, wit and yes, political conscience, of NOFX, and are all the better for it. This is by far their most accomplished record to date, with nary a mediocre track on it. Top notch. (RK)
(Fat/PO Box 193690/San Francisco, CA
94119)



FRODUS

"And We Washed Our Weapons In The Sea" CD

This album is either absolutely intriguing or absolutely insignificant. Clever guitar work, mellow

REVIEWS

rhythms, college radio vocals. Hi-fi lo-fi? Maybe an indie rock REFUSED. (STM)
(Fueled by Ramen/PO Box 12563/Gainesville,
FL 32604)

GENE CRAZED & HIS ROCKABILLY BASTARDS **Graveyard Rock 7 EP**

The one-man-band guy's actual band, in which he is backed up by cute chick bassist Atomic Barbara and a drummer named Adolph. They've got more of a straightforward psychobilly sound, but still have that obsession with horror titles like "Graveyard Rock" and "Spider Walk". Scary and rockin' stuff. (AW)

(Crazed Bop/mail.dex-net.com)

GENE CRAZED

"The One-Man Band" 7" EP

This is definitely crazed stuff that owes a lot to the sound of HASIL ADKINS and the LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY. Primitive, lo-fi recordings by a demented Italian guy. "Rockabilly Spooky" and "Vampire Rock" display a penchant for horror movie themes as well, not unlike another one-man band, JACK STARR.

(Crazed Bop/mail.dex-net.com)



GENERATORS

"Dead At 16" 7"

There are two songs on this 45. "Dead At 16" is a really good upbeat pogo punk tune, whereas "I'm An Upstart" is a great ANGELIC UPSTARTS cover.

What more do you need to hear? (CLL)
(TKO/4104 24th Street/San Francisco, CA
94114)



GENERATORS

"Tyranny" CD

Late-70's style punk rock a la STIFF LIITTLE FINGERS and 999. They have a lot of punchy fast- to mid-tempo pogo beats, all done really

well. Featuring ex-members of SCHLEPROCK and the CHOICE, this band has managed to produce a good number of catchy tunes. (CLL)

(TKO/4104 24th Street # 103/San Francisco,
CA 94117)

SHITLIST



GIGANTOR

"Back To The Rockets!!!" CD

A fairly pleasant and eminently competent collection of bubblegum pop-punk songs. They're well-played and well-produced, but a bit lacking in the catchy tunes department. It's not bad, though their name always makes me think of the DICKIES, and they are not in that class league. (RK)
(Rotten/Rottenrecords.com)

THE GLASSPACK

"American Exhaust" CD

This thing is fucking miserable. Southern hard rock/metal garbage. Sample song title: "Jim Beam and Good Green". Also includes instrumental jams that are painful to sit through. Even the cool fuzzy production can't save this. (MC)
(Riverrock/135 Vernon Avenue/Louisville, KY 40206)

GORE GORE GIRLS

"Strange Girls" CD

Excellent trashy Detroit-style r'n'r. The music these gals churn out is impossible not to like, marked as it is by loud trashy guitars, dirty piercing leads, cool 60's melodies, and lots of pounding and pummeling. The only downside is that the lead vocalist sometimes displays too much of a "bar band" singing style for my taste. (JB)
(Get Hip/PO Box 666/Canonsburg, PA 15233)



GREEN PAJAMAS

"Ghosts Of Love" CD

Get Hip has reissued this 1990 Bomp LP on a CD, tacking on a few bonus cuts for good measure.

The GREEN PAJAMAS play intricate, well-crafted pop music with a 60s/psych feel to it. It's not exactly my cup of tea, but I still thought it was pretty cool. (MC)
(Get Hip/PO Box 666/Canonsburg, PA 15317)

GUITAR WOLF

"Live!" CD

Really exquisite packaging for this live release from the Japanese mostly-instro kings: a double digi-pack with a great cartoon cover and a bunch of pics, tour dates, and Japanese stuff inside. It's a good recording which captures the maniac energy of their stageshow, and it includes lots of

your favorite songs. The second disc, though, is a pointless digital hardcore remix of the song "Jet Virus". (AW)
(Sony Japan)



GUTTERMOUTH

"Covered With Ants" CD

Maybe it's just me, but I never understood the attraction of GUTTERMOUTH. They are not funny, the music is bland melodic (ha) HC a la the VANDALS, and they consistently sound weak and weedy - undoubtedly a production feat in itself, given the big bucks I'm sure are lavished on the recording. Another one to ignore. (RK)
(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)

H2o

"Go" CD

If you loved the first H2o album, well, this isn't the H2o you remember. That familiar melodic hardcore has been impeccably tailored into accessible pop punk. It's done quite well, but lacks the streetwise integrity of this band's earlier work. (STM)
(MCA)

HASTE

"When Reason Sleeps" CD

Definitely for fans of DISMEMBERED and SONS OF ABRAHAM. 100% new school metallic hardcore. It's chaotic and enraged, but it doesn't lose itself in a wall of noise. (STM)
(Century Media/1453-A 14TH Street #324/Santa Monica, CA 90404)

HEAD

"Total Commitment 7" EP

Another great EP from Seattle's HEAD. Now a trio, this their first release since Giggles left in 1998. The A-side is a fab cover of P.F. SLOAN's "She's My Woman", featuring Dave Holmes of the WIRETAPS on electric sitar; it's a bit of a departure in sound for HEAD, but is good stuff nonetheless. The B-side tracks are more in their standard RAMONES vein. (AW)
(Evil Clown/PO Box 9144/Seattle, WA 98104)

HEADWOUND

"The Early Years" CD

Another fine retrospective release from Headache, one of the most consistently reliable punk labels around. This CD contains all three 7" releases by New Jersey's own HEADWOUND, plus unreleased bonus tracks.

Among the standout songs are beer-fueled blue collar punk classics like "Tuck-A-Buck", "Barfly", "Bergen County", "Kings of Beer", "Keep It in the Country", and "DMV", all of which are guaranteed to precipitate loud singalongs and additional rounds of drinks. (JB)
(Headache/PO Box 38/Newton, NJ 07860)



IDIOTS

"Evel Knievel" CD

The IDIOTS are probably one of the best bands from San Francisco, and this is a great representation of their sound. The lyrics are as funny as can be, and the music backing them is really good SFI fall-off-your-skateboard punk! Some of the guitar changes have a FEAR feel to them, and some of the songs are from their out-of-print Beer City 7". Go JAKS! (CLL)
(Beer City/PO Box 26035/Milwaukee, WI 53226)



INKLING

"Miscommunications" CD

Great technical metal noise with vocals that schizophrenically swing from screaming to slightly off-key singing, so fans of CAVE IN and D.E.P. should appreciate it. It's been done before, but INKLING does it with razorblade precision. The melodic parts (damn near indie rock) can be a wee bit trite at times, but as a whole this is still a riveting release. (STM)
(Hex/201 Maple Lane/Syracuse, NY 13212)



INSUBORDINATES

"Four Years Later" CD

Pissed-off, fast-paced hardcore streetpunk with a touch of Oi and chaos. They have a good number of chanting singalong choruses and a big fuck you attitude, but they also have a political punk stance. (CLL)
(Squigtone/PO Box 38/Newton, NJ 07860)



THE IRVING KLAW'S

"Pajama Party" CD

Pretty unexciting garage rock, sometimes venturing into rockabilly and surf territory. There's at least one song about hookers, and an introduction to the latest dance craze, "Do The Claw", which was the highpoint for me. A few moments got me shakin', but there was nothing to go nuts over. (MC)

(Get Hip/PO Box 666/Canonsburg, PA 15317)



JOHNNY THUNDERS
"Panic on Sunset Strip"
CD

I don't know how many "Thunders Live" albums I own and I can't tell you how many have been

released, but one thing is for sure. Every time I sit through another "Thunders Live" release, I get a big dumb smile on my face. This one's recorded ballsy, loud, and lively, and it's even got Arthur Kane and Jerry Nolan. Great stuff. (X)
(Munster/PO Box 18107/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)

KAMIKAZES

"Time For Rock'n'Roll" 7" EP

The KAMIKAZES treat us to four great tunes on one thick slab of vinyl.

The guys really know what their doing, drawing equal amounts from the DEVIL DOGS and the REAL KIDS. This will definitely get you going. (MC)
(Alien Snatch/Moerikeweg 1/74199 Untergruppenbach/GERMANY)



KIDS ARE SICK
s/t CD

Surprise surprise, another Scandinavian hard rock band. Unfortunately, these guys don't rely as much on

70's punk/glam as their co-nationals the HELLACOPTERS and GLUECIFIER, but instead take the head-on metal approach. If you want some good rock from this region, buy the MENSEN record. (MC)
(Lowlife/PO Box 255/114 79 Stockholm/SWEDEN)



KID GORGEOUS
"Friday Night Knife Fight"
CD

You know those movies where a serial killer has a creepy little shack out in the boondocks where he

does all his devious deeds? This album would be on the stereo in that shack. Throbbing, grisly music accompanied by BLOODLET-esque vocals. Fans of the entire Trustkill and HydraHead catalogues should take note of this stirring release. (STM)
(Uprising/PO Box 1096/New York, NY 10003)

KID WITH MAN HEAD

"Fond Memories Of The Halibut Rodeo..." CD
Six tracks, a couple lifted from previous full-



lengths, about girls, in that muscular melodic vein traversed by the likes of the mid-period DOUGHBOYS, ALL SYSTEMS GO, and their ilk.

Lots of guitars, vocals, and driving melodies. Greg Gaffin gets credit for mixing two thirds of the tracks, and he did a good job. (RK)
(Boss Tuneage/PO Box 19550/London, SW11 1FG/ENGLAND)

KING ARTHUR'S QUART

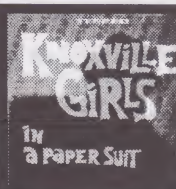
"Live At Allen Jr. High School, 1966" CD

A great archival release of Rudi Protrudi's first band in the 60s. There are only eight songs, plus one more from RUDI's next band RIGOR MORTIS, but they give you a great peek into this garage rock legend's beginnings. Two of the songs became reworked as FUZZTONES tunes some twenty years later, and the rest of their set consisted of trashed-out covers of songs like "Gloria" and "Psychotic Reaction". (AW)
(Sin Recs/www.fuzztones.net)

KINKS

"BBC Sessions, 1964-1977" double CD

Finally, the KINKS get a well-deserved BBC retrospective compilation. Disc One is the meat of the set, with live-in-studio versions of most of their hits, plus a few obscurities like "This Strange Effect" and "Good Luck Charm". Disc two mostly contains their inferior music hall material from the 70s, but hidden in-between the dreck is a stunning 1968 version of "Did You See His Name". Odd sequencing aside, this could easily have been a single disc, but what a disc. (AW) (some major)



KNOXVILLE GIRLS
"In A Paper Suit" CD

Talk about your garage supergroup, featuring ex-members of the CRAMPS, CHROME CRANKS and others. Three guitarists,

drums, organ and no bass player make for a swampy, dirty sound that is one part rooted in the blues, the other in punk rock sensibility. There are great originals like "Oh, Baby, What You Gonna Do Now?" and "Drop Dead Gorgeous", plus some nice versions of songs by the SHANGRI-LAS, HANK WILLIAMS, and HASIL ADKINS. (AW)
(In The Red/2627 E. Strong Place/Anaheim, CA 92806)

LARS FREDRIKSEN & THE BASTARDS
"Intro" CD

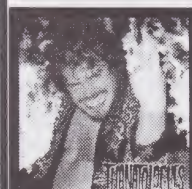
REVIEWS

This CD is, of course, self-titled, but our editorial guidelines are to list the first track as the name of the record if it doesn't have a name, so there you go. This is actually really good, catchy, gruff, punk-as-fuck punkness. Much better than RANCID...I guess LARS got the good bits of the early CLASH and S.L.F. and mashed them into this. The snippets of lyrics I heard were pretty embarrassing, but then I only got one of those stupid promo things to review. (RK)
(Hellcat - it says "do not duplicate" on the CD-R I got to review)

LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY

"3 Unreleased 1968 Tracks" 7" EP

I love the LSC, and this record from the one-man-band is no letdown. Three unreleased archival recordings, produced by T. Bone Burnette of all people, including the excellent "Donna Plus Apollo", which I could swear I've heard before. (AW)
(Crazed Bop/mail.dex-net.com)



LES THANATOLOGUES
s/t CD

Why is that every shitty punk rock band has a singer that sounds exactly like Grover from Sesame Street? Anyway, these

French Canadians let it rip with twelve tunes, half of which are sung in French. The only highpoint for me was their cover of "London Rocker", which they do a nice job with. (MC)
(Les Thanatologues/E-mail: evedenis@videotron.ca)



LET IT BURN
"This Is The Sound" CD

I love it when a band I've never heard just completely blows me away on the first listen. Fast hardcore with an almost

rock'n'roll flair. LET IT BURN are like an optimistic AMERICAN NIGHTMARE, blazing without losing it's sense of rhythm. This thing is a keeper. (STM)
(Metro/PO Box 1108/Pisnt.Bcb, NJ 08742)

LEWD

"Roughouse" 7" EP

I saw this, the most recent line-up of the LEWD, a while ago and they rocked the house. Sats still has that patented growl-sing going on, and how many punk bands feature a member's son in the band? That's right,

SHITLIST

guitarist! One new song, and two re-recordings of old songs that all scream LEWD. (AW)
(702/PO Box 204/Reno, NV 89504)



LIQUOR PIGS

"DT's For Jesus" CD

There's lots of Canadian beer-drinking tunes from this rockin' band hailing from just south of Toronto.

They have a very FANG-like vocal style, and most of the songs are mid-tempo speed, which makes for some really good punk rock. (CLL)
(Amp/92 Kenilworth Avenue South/Hamilton, Ontario L8K 259/CANADA)



LUCKIE STRIKE

"Future Is Turning" CD EP

Folks tell me they are going to be the next big thing, but I don't like this record. The singer has a spirited set of pipes, a la

TILT, but the music is unremarkable, though bashed out with gusto. Methinks you've got to write the odd good tune if you are going to make it. But then again, they have chicks in the band, so maybe image is everything. (RK)

(Tomato Head)

LUV'D ONES

"Truth Gotta Stand" CD

Mid-60's female garage rock pioneers from Michigan, the brainchild of Char Vinnedge. One of the first all-girl groups to play their own instruments as well as write their own songs, the LUV'D ONES cranked out a primitive musical mixture of fuzz-guitar rockers (e.g., the title track, "I'm Leaving You", and "Up Down Sue"), cool moody numbers ("Stand Tall" and "It's Quiet"), a heavily-reverbed instrumental ("Scratchy"), and several pedestrian covers. The most extraordinary thing herein are the amazing and unexpected raunch guitar parts – check out "Please Get Up" and "Portrait". (JB)
(Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)

LITTLE BOY BLUES

"In the Woodland of Weir" CD

Chicago's LITTLE BOY BLUES managed to record one truly spectacular garage punk song, "The Great Train Robbery", as well as some superior covers (e.g., "I Can Only Give You Everything"), almost all of which

appeared on their early 7" releases. By the time they recorded their 1968 album, which is also included on this CD compilation, they'd become much more psychedelized and only managed to come up with a few good tracks (such as "Cathedral" and "Mr. Tripp Wouldn't Listen"). (JB)
(Acid Symposium, no address listed)



M.I.A.

"Lost Boys" CD

A necessary reissue. M.I.A. were yet another classic, underappreciated early 80s SoCal hardcore

band that easily ranked with the vintage ADOLESCENTS, MAD PARADE, and SOCIAL DISTORTION. This wonderful disc includes their original vinyl outings, along with some spikey live material, and sounds as vital and as fresh as it did 17 years ago! How come they don't make punk this good anymore? (RK)

(Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)



Mad Caddies

MAD CADDIES

"Rock The Plank" CD

The band ought to be huge. Much like NOFX, the flit seamlessly through a variety of melodic punk

styles, with the odd skankin' or swing number thrown in. And much like NOFX, they write incredibly catchy songs, laden with pop hooks, and perform them all incredibly well. (RK)

(Fat/PO Box 193690/San Francisco, CA 94119)



MADCAP

"Stand Your Ground" CD

This is a reissue of their "Songs On Tap" CD I raved about last issue, minus one track, for some strange reason. Anyways,

this is well worth wider exposure. Rambunctious, melodic punk, with strong echoes of the CLASH at their "Give 'Em Enough Rope" best. (RK)
(Side One Dummy/6201 Sunset Blvd, Suite 211/Hollywood, CA 90028)

MARBLES

"Seduction" CD

I spent the first couple of tracks trying for the life of me to figure out who the MARBLES remind me of. There was instant recognition on track 3, when they tear through "I Wanna Go Home" by HOLLY & THE ITALIANS. Oh yeah, it's almost dead on at times. This

really cheered me up when I heard it, and don't worry, enough of the hooks are their own. (JC)
(Break Up/PO Box 15372/Columbus, OH 43215)



MELVINS

"Colossus of Destiny" CD

This has a mere two tracks. The first is some sort of noise experimentation for 55 minutes and 22 seconds, when the drums start. Then,

4 minutes later, track 2 starts for 5 seconds and ends. Yeah, real cool, right? (X)
(IPECAC/PO Box 1197/Alameda, CA 94501)

MENSEN

"Delusions Of Grandeur" LP

The female TURBONEGRO? Just might be. These young Norwegian gals sound great, playing energetic, punked-out rock'n'roll with the obvious RUNAWAYS (they cover "Cherry Bomb") and GIRLSCHOOL influence. Another great release from Gearhead Records. (MC)
(Gearhead/PO Box 421219/San Francisco, CA 94142)

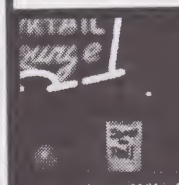


MICKEY & THE SALTY SEADOGS

"Salt Water and Whiskey" CD

Former MILKSHAKE Mickey Hampshire's latest outfit. Not much needs to be said,

since any Hampshire/Childish enthusiast has probably already picked this up, but this is a really good record filled with fourteen R&B punkers. Fans of his previous work won't be disappointed. (MC)
(www.sympathyrecords.com)



THE MODIFIERS

"Show and Tell" CD

"Show and Tell" treats the listener to some quality rock that is very reminiscent of early SST-era DINOSAUR JR. The eleven

tunes on this CD were written between 1993 and 1998, so these guys have been at it awhile. It's cool to hear this kind of sound going, and more bands should take note. (MC)

(Cool Basement/8 Andrew Street/Cambridge, MA 02139)

REVIEWS



MOMUS

"Folktronic" CD

MOMUS is a silly little twit who thinks that he is awfully clever. What he is, in reality, is pretentious, trite, and musically inept.

If you're into this kind of electronic folk pop thing, I suggest you check out MAGNETIC FIELDS, who are similar but a whole lot sharper and musically adept. (JC) (Cherry Red)

MORNING SHAKES

"Let's Get Liquored Up" 7" EP

Fantastic punk rock from these vets. It's produced by Steve Baise of DEVIL DOGS fame, and you get two originals and a cover of the DICKS' "Kill From The Heart". (AW) (Mad Driver/maddriver@iname.com) (mailto:Driver/maddriver@iname.com)

MOTHERFUCKERS

"We're Fucked" LP

This is definitely not for anyone who is easily offended. Ballistic in-your-face hardcore is what band presents. This record contains songs from their out of print 7" and others that were never released before. Rumor has it the MOTHERFUCKERS have reformed and will soon be shitting down the throats of every punk that crosses their path. (CLL) (Beer City/PO Box 26035/Milwaukee, WI 53226)

MOVING SIDEWALKS

"Flash" CD

For those not in the know, these guys featured Billy Gibbons, late of ZZ TOP fame, on guitar and vocals. The similarity ends about there, though. Firmly rooted in Texas dark psych, these guys released a few singles and one way rare album, all of which are included on this release. The standouts include "Crimson Witch", "Flashback", "99th Floor", and their psychedelized version of "I Want To Hold Your Hand". (AW) (Akarna, no address listed)



MULLENS

"Tough To Tell" CD

The MULLENS are a great fucking band, and it's a shame that more people don't recognize that. This is their third album and

possibly their best release yet. They have that THUNDERS/DOLLS thing down, coupled with an impossible to pinpoint Texas punk magic. Totally great. (MC) (Get Hip/PO Box 666/Canonsburg, PA 15317)

N.O.T.A.



Live at the crystal pistol

N.O.T.A.

"Live At The Crystal Pistol" CD

Ah, yes. Back in the day (1983 on this particular occasion), bands used to record live demos to (gasp) actually sell, trade, shop around and the like. Here are thirteen raw, fuzzy, and absolutely rocking cuts from a woefully underrated band. The quality isn't too bad, and provides a fair representation of the guts, grime, and glory of punk and hardcore before it was sanitized for the MTV generation. (RK) (Prank/PO box 410892/San Francisco, CA 94141)

N.R.A.

"New Recovery" CD

On this new full-length (perhaps their fifth?) Holland's N.R.A. have traded in their old SoCal melodic skatepunk sound for a more updated SoCal variant. Thus, they've slowed down a tad, piled on the angst, opened a few chords, and sound more like a NO MOTIV or AUTOMATIC 7 than LAGWAGON or PENNYWISE. Atypical for Gearhead. (RK) (Gearhead/PO Box 421219/San Francisco, CA 94142)

NEATBEATS

"Mercurial..." CD

A fine neo-beat group from Japan, complete with matching dark suits and ties and an authentically retro and uptempo beat attack. As is so often the case, the Japanese somehow manage to do an excellent job recapturing r'n'r sounds that originated elsewhere, and the NEATBEATS are no exception. Herein one can find some killer originals, such as "Looks So Nice" and "Do the Global Twist", as well as several respectable covers. (JB) (Get Hip/PO Box 666/Canonsburg, PA 15317)



NEBULA

"Charged" CD

There's been a lot of talk about this band. NEBULA is real riff heavy and repetitive like BLACK SABBATH or a castrated, bong-soaked RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE. If ya like that kind of stuff, you're gonna be stoked, dude. (X) (SubPop/PO Box 20645/Seattle, WA 98102)



NEW TOWN ANIMALS

"Lose That Girl/Now That He's Free" 7"

Great UK-flavored 77 poppy punk from Canada.

They all wear those colored New Wave sunglasses and skinny ties. Musically, these cats are clearly into the TOY DOLLS and GENERATION X. Give us an album! (MC) (Mint/PO Box 3613/Vancouver, BC V6B 3Y6/CANADA)

NIKKI SUDDEN

"The Last Bandit" double CD

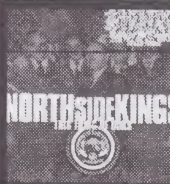
After fronting the seminal garagey art-punk group SWELL MAPS, NIKKI SUDDEN went on to form a succession of cool bands that have all paid homage, in one way or another, to r'n'r's greatest traditions. His latest offering is no exception, as it's full of rockin', folky, or countrified numbers with insidious hooks, introspective lyrics, plaintive vocals, and a degree of wisdom about human foibles and the vicissitudes of fame that's all too rare nowadays. Songs like "It's Gonna Be All Right" and "Too Bad For You" sound like something BOB DYLAN might have penned if he'd been a diehard rock'n'roller. (JB) (Alive-Total Energy/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



NO MOTIV

"Diagram For Healing" CD

NO MOTIV have always managed to straddle that blurry line between melodic SoCal skatepunk, emo, and college rock, and make it all sound appealing. And none more so than on this new disc, whose consistency and quality throughout is damn impressive. A fucking fine record. (RK) (Vagrant)



NORTHSIDE KINGS

"This Thing Of Ours" CD

A ferocious assault that levels everything in its way. Swift, harsh, and full of venom. Think of NEGATIVE APPROACH.

Think of SHEER TERROR.

Think of buying this record and then do it. (STM) (Thorpe/PO Box 2007/Upper Darby, PA 19082)

THE NOTHINGS

"Lovely" CD

God, these lyrics are really bad. Especially when they try to squeeze long words in to complete a sentence. There are far too many "where did we go wrong?" stories here.

SHITLIST



six tracks, and that's where the saving grace ends. What a disappointment. (X) (Galaxy/17048 Baltar Street/Van Nuys, CA 91406)



NOW TIME DELEGATION "Watch For Today" CD

The NOW TIME DELEGATION is an all-star combo featuring Lisa Kekaula from

the BELLRAYS, Tim Kerr from the LORD HIGH FIXERS, and members of BLACKTOP and the GOSPEL SWINGERS. The result is a jaw-dropping soul/rock record that has to be heard to be believed. Lisa's vocals have never been better and Kerr's guitar work is great, making this one of the best albums of 2001. (MC)

(In The Red/2627 E. Strong Place/Anaheim, CA 92806)



ORANGE SEVENTEEN

"(We Want) Rock N' Roll Tonight/Plunder" 7"

Above-average punk with more than a hint of metal.

"(We Want) Rock N' Roll Tonight" is a pretty

cool driving tune, but the screech and wail vocals turned me off. Same with the flip.

(MC)

(Dart/PO Box 1843/Fargo, ND 58107)



THE ORANGES BAND

"Nine Hundred Miles of Fucking Hell" CD EP

These five tunes feature thickly-layered guitar parts with an arty edge, all the while retaining a

fair amount of pop. It reminded me a lot of WIRE and PERE UBU, which is OK in my book. An interesting sound that really struck me. (MC)

(Morphius/PO Box 13474/Baltimore, MD 21203)

PAGANS

"Shit Street" CD

Basically, what Crypt has done is split up the now out-of-print "Everybody Hates You" CD - which contained almost all of the amazing PAGANS studio tracks - into two separate CDs and then added bonus live and studio cuts. "Shit Street" includes most of their late 70's

studio material, and combines it with some brutal live material from 1979. It's a must-have collection, since the PAGANS may have been the best ever American punk band, but to these ears the mix on the studio cuts is somewhat inferior to that of "Everybody Hates You". (JB)

(Crypt/3 Reading Avenue/Frenchtown, NJ 08825)

PAGANS

"The Pink Album Plus" CD

Here we have an LP of PAGANS material, recorded in the early 80s, that was originally released on a Minnesota label, as well as additional studio and live tracks. It's all raw as hell, and some of the unreleased material is fabulous, including their versions of "Fever" and PERE UBU's "Final Solution". If you aren't in awe of Cleveland's finest, you don't have the slightest idea what punk rock is all about - and probably never will. (JB)

(Crypt/3 Reading Avenue/Frenchtown, NJ 08825)

PERE UBU

"The Shape of Things" CD

David Thomas, PERE UBU's enigmatic lead singer, has restarted his old label in order to put out some archival Cleveland stuff. Until he does a legitimate release of ROCKET FROM THE TOMB material, here's the next best thing: an early UBU show when PETER LAUGHNER was still in the band. The sets here contain lotsa faves, including "Heart of Darkness", "30 Seconds Over Tokyo", and "Life Stinks". (AW)

(Hearthan/www.projex.demon.co.uk/hearpen/html)

PINHEAD CIRCUS



"The Black Power Of Romance" CD

Thirteen more slabs of sore throat, twin guitar, raging melodic hardcore action. These guys dispensed with the backpacks several

records ago (backpacks never could hold a crate of beer anyways), and have been tearing it up ever since. Fans of bands like DILLINGER 4, who put the punk back into rock, should be lapping this up. (RK)

(BYO/PO Box 67A64/Los Angeles, CA 90067)

PINHEADS L.V.

"You Can't Drink From My Cup" CD

This is your typically happy pop punk "la-la-la" crap, which is not really what I'm into. Certain other *Hit List* writers who might like it should have reviewed it, but it's just too



damn nice for my angry blood. They may even be Christians! (CLL) (AVD/8370 W. Cheyenne, Box 109-22/Las Vegas, NV 89129)



PINKOS

"Free As You Want To Be" CD

This record is really good, with a spare, stripped-down sound reminiscent of the best of late 70's British

punk. Y'know, when bands like WIRE, SWELL MAPS, and the FALL were actually charting new territory with what you could do with drums and guitars (and in this case, just drums and guitars and vocals). An in-your-face pissed-off political stance only adds to this humdinger. (RK)

(Empty US/PO Box 12034/Seattle, WA 98102)



PINTSIZE

"Collapse In Style" CD

More musings of the emoidierock variety. It's well played and Well-produced, but it sounds just like all the others. If you

like the others, go for it. (RK)

(Building/18 Spring Street/New York, NY 10012)



THE PITS

"Introducing My New High/National Anthem" 7"

The PITS give us a peek into the current state of UK punk, which (perhaps not surprisingly) is quite a bit

like UK 77 punk. This 7" features two mid-tempo punk songs with more personal lyrics than is typical for this genre. Nothing to get excited about, but a good listen. (MC) (Rapid Pulse/PO Box 5076/Milford, CT 06460)

PRETTY THINGS

"Hyde & Psych" CD

A not-so-legit release of live recordings by this legendary Brit band. Don't be expecting great sound quality, but there is precious little live documentation of this band, especially during their psychedelic period. The first few songs were recorded at a 1968 outdoor concert in Hyde Park, whereas the next bunch are from a 1969 show in Amsterdam. (AW)

(Deep Six-Chapter One/no address listed)

PRETTY THINGS

"Pure & Pretty" CD

This boot features great tracks from the "Emotions" album sans the orchestral overdubs, some of which appeared as bonus tracks on the CD reissue of that album. The rest of the CD consists of live BBC and Beat Club sessions in the 1965-70 era, and two live tracks from the same Amsterdam show as on the "Hyde & Psych" CD. (AW)

(Deep Six-Chapter One/no address listed)



RAIN ON THE PARADE

"Body Bag" CD EP

I love when posi gets pissed. Fast, angry, and looking for answers to life's injustices. It breaks no new ground and never strays

too far from their mates in this genre (INSTEAD, BOLD, MOUTHPIECE), but it is still a

solid release. (STM)

(Soulforce/Apartado de Correos #18.199/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)

RANCID HELL SPAWN

"Scalpal Party" CD

43, count 'em, 43 tracks from the twisted minds in RANCID HELL SPAWN. This CD contains the "Chainsaw Masochist" LP in it's entirety, as well as tracks spanning their entire career between 1988 and 1995. Some tracks are poppier and electronic, but most are dark and disturbed industrial. (JC)

(Wrench/BCM Box 4049/London WC1N 3XX/ENGLAND)

REAL KIDS

"She's Got Everything" 7" EP

More unreleased live stuff from these legendary powerpoppers. There's a great KINKS cover on the A-side, and covers of EDDIE COCHRAN and MITCH RYDER on the reverse. Incredibly rockin' stuff! (AW)

(Norton/www.nortonrecords.com)

REAL KIDS

"Live in Detroit" 7"

This is kind of a weird release. As much as I love these guys, this doesn't really capture them at their best. Two live songs from their 1999 reunion tour, but they sound way out of tune and really tired or something. (AW)

(D.U.I./PO Box 46073/Mt. Clemens, MI 48046)

RED LETTER DAY

"Chance Meetings: The Best of Red Letter Day 1985-1999" CD

Endorsed by the U.K. SUBS' very own Charlie



REDCOATS

"Meet the Redcoats" CD

PAUL REVERE and company may have adopted the imagery of 18th-century American revolutionaries during the 60s, but these New Jersey lads instead called themselves the REDCOATS, which was perhaps appropriate given their obsession with the BEATLES and proclaimed goal of becoming a "totally English"-style band.

There are several fetching pop songs herein, but curiously only a few have a genuine Merseybeat sound (e.g., "Another Took Her Place"). "You Had No Right" is also a gem, and it's good to finally be able to hear all of their long unavailable recordings. (JB)

(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

REDSHIFT

"I-Scream" CD

No lyrics, no track listing, nothing. Just a CD. How can I review this? It's speedy, but with mid-tempo breakdowns. Think of CAUSE FOR ALARM. Track #5 is great. (STM)

(Soulforce/Apartado de Correos

#18.199/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)



RESINATORS

"Way Gone/Gotta Go" 7"

What a debut! "Way Gone" sounds like a classic Rip Off Records sort of

tune with speed and up-

front guitars, whereas "Gotta Go" is like a southern fried version of the CONTROLLERS' "Suburban Suicide". Find this and you'll

thank me later. (MC)

(Dart/PO Box 1843/Fargo, ND 58107)



REVELATORS

"Versus: The Prozac-Poppin' Whinin' Sissies" 7"

Christ, these guys rocked. This 7", from 1996, contains one of the best

tunes from that decade, "Serve The Man". If

Harper, and listening to this collection you can understand why. It's immediately apparent that R.L.D. and the SUBS are cut from the same cloth, though the former are a tad

less aggressive and a bit more sentimental in a VIBRATORS kind of way. I'm really glad this made it my way, and am even more pleased to endorse it. (X)

(Zip/116 New Montgomery Street, Suite 2000/San Francisco, CA 94105)

REVIEWS

you don't know about the REVELATORS, you've been missing out on some fantastic bare-bones rock'n'roll. Crypt is releasing their posthumous second album, so the time to revisit them is now. (MC)

(Crypt/PO Box 304292/20325 Hamburg/GERMANY)



RICHMOND SLUTS

s/t CD

These kids have put a smile on my face from day one, and this disc is no exception. If you want a

garagey 60's-influenced HEARTBREAKERS with keyboards, look no further. It's right in step with the ensuing HIVES epidemic. What perfect timing, especially from a band of rock'n'roll drunks! (X)

(Disaster/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



RISE

"Freezer Burn" CD

An 18-song "best of" collection from Canada's RISE, half of which consists of new/unreleased songs.

Culled from twelve years of

the band's recordings, the songs are mostly of the alternative rock/indie pop variety, with some up-tempo punky moments. Some are a little too long and swirly at to hold my attention. (MC)

(Boss Tuneage/PO Box 1955/London SW11 1FG/ENGLAND)



ROCKET 455

"Go To Hell" CD

The fabulous and now sadly defunct ROCKET 455 were a hell of a band, perhaps the most exciting and promising outfit to

come out of Detroit since the GORIES. High-energy garage rock at its best. This is a damn good collection of tracks that span the band's entire career. (JC)

(Get Hip/PO Box 666/Canonsburg, PA 15217)

ROTTERS

"Pull It and Yell" CD

Even if L.A.'s ROTTERS had never written another good song, they'd be forever famous – and justly so – for their hilariously snotty late 70's garage punk blast "Sit on My Face Stevie Nicks". But they also managed to churn out some other offensive chestnuts, including "I Wanna Be The Fuehrer" [sic],

SHITLIST

"Pink Flamingos", and "Thank God I'm Damned", all of which can be found on this retrospective collection of their early material. Appealingly inept and juvenile. (JB) (Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

S.M.D.

"Pissing Beer" CD

S.M.D has been hated in SoCal for over 11 years now. Blazing fast on speed and drunk on Budweiser beer, S.M.D play true East L.A. hardcore. There's lots of anger, aggression, impatience, and violence here, and the drumming is awesome and not reliant on your average old punk beat. So go score some coke, rob all the beer from your local store with a gun, and listen to S.M.D. (CLL) (King Of Drunk/8807 Arma Street/Pico Rivera, CA 90660)



SAFETY PINS

"Punk-Rock Disasters, Pt. 1" CD

This CD contains nothing but cover songs from some great early punk rock bands, including the LEWD,

the FUCK-UPS, the WEIRDOS, the NUNS, T.S.O.L., the DEADBEATS, BLACK FLAG, RED CROSS, and VOX POP. The SAFETY PINS, who are from Spain, do justice to these songs, making this a good record. (CLL) (Munster/PO Box 18107/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)

SCREAMERS

"In A Better World" double CD

This amazing archival release concentrates mostly on the live sound of the SCREAMERS, duplicating almost nothing from any previous boots. A great release, with a nice digipack sleeve design, silk-screened cover, and thick booklet of pics and reprinted articles.

Soundwise, as is the case with much archival 70's punk, it's very lo-fi but still damn good. For a synth/electric piano/drums/vocals combo, they had an extraordinarily aggressive sound. (AW)

(Xerpoid/www.synthpunk.org)

SECRETS

"Who's Walkin' Who" 7"

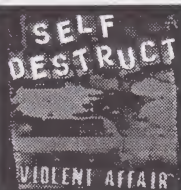
This is ex-DEVIL DOG Steve Baise's new band, which also features CANDY SNATCHERS singer Larry May on guitar! Fabulous, ultra-catchy powerpop that'll have you boppin' around the room in no time. Can't wait for the album! (AW)

(Sympathy)

SECOND COMING

"In Denial Of Our Impermanence" CD

As they have recently broken up, this album stands as the final testament to this criminally-underrated band. The craftsmanship of the music is extraordinary, the words are moving, and the vocals are passionate. Hardcore as inspirational as it is irate. Recommended for kids who love hardcore, but not those who just listen to what their friends listen to. (STM) (breakoutrec@hotmail.com)



SELF DESTRUCT

"Violent Affair" 7" EP

Here we have five songs' worth of chaotic blazing fast, angry mohawk punk.

Four of the songs are in the RIOT SQUAD (UK) vein, but "Vicious Cycle" is a mid-tempo Oi streetpunk chant-a-long ditty. (CLL)

(Punkcore/PO Box 916/Middle Island, NY 11953)

SHAKERS

"Por Favor!" CD

A really fabulous mid-60's BEATLES-inspired group from Uruguay, the small cosmopolitan country across the Rio de la Plata from Argentina. Unlike most would-be BEATLES emulators, however, los SHAKERS wrote spectacularly good originals that were far better than the norm and may even have rivalled some of their mentors' creations. This compilation contains almost all of their material, including their outstanding debut LP filled with irresistibly hummable tracks like "Don't Ask Me Love" and "Baby Yeah Yeah". A must for beat fans. (JB)

(Big Beat/42-50 Steele Road/London NW10 7AS/ENGLAND)



SHE

"...Wants A Piece of You" CD

Sacto's most notorious all-female 60's garage band, lovingly resurrected by Big Beat. "Outta Reach" is an organ-dominated psych-punk gem, and SHE also bashed out several other appealing garage numbers (like "Bad Girl" and "Not For Me"). But the most remarkable thing about them are their punky tough gal attitudes and lyrics, even if their impact is diluted by an undistorted guitar sound and some overly conventional vocal stylings. (JB) (Big Beat/42-50 Steele Road/London NW10 7AS/ENGLAND)

THE SHIVERING

"Behind Broken Eyes" CD

This record seems to be a few years too late, but I would have loved it in high school. They just need some more time to work through their melodramatic youth, like CAP N' JAZZ and LYNC. Rough-sounding songs played a bit too fast and afraid to be too punk rock or too metal. But there is some good stuff here to cling to and enjoy, and this is a band that will just get better and better. (cj) (No/PO Box 14088/Berkeley, CA 94712)

SHOCK

"This Generation's On Vacation" 7" EP

A classic punk single from 1978 gets reissued, or rather bootlegged. Great stuff that walks the line between punk and powerpop, and you've likely heard the title track on an early "Killed By Death" volume. The B-side songs are excellent as well, but I'm still waiting for a full-length anthology release from these guys. (AW) (Impact/PO Box 15537/Long Beach, CA 90815)



SHORT FUSES

"Beneath the City of the Guitar Vixens/Here Come The Warm Chicks" 7"

Sympathy for the Record Industry has a knack for finding strong female rock combos. The SHORT FUSES combine scorching guitar solos with great female vocals that are equal parts gruff and sweet. The song titles sound like the names of Russ Meyer films, and the cover art features naked women holding Gibson guitars. (MC) (www.sympathyrecords.com)



THE SHORT LIVED

"Long Live the Short Lived" CD

The SHORT LIVED play some fast but fun punk rock with back-and-forth whiney female vocals and gruff male vocals, a killer combination. The girl's vocals remind me bit of BLATZ. Most of the songs and lyrics are pretty silly. (CLL) (Rodent Popsicle/PO Box 1143/Allston, MA 02134)

SICK THINGS

s/t 7" EP

Previously unreleased Britpunk from 1977 that was originally slated for the Raw label but didn't come out until 83. Great female vox and "Bondage Boy", a song about tying boys up and having sex with them, is alone

worth the price of admission. (AW)
(Damaged Goods/www.damagedgoods.com)



SIXER

"Saving Grace" CD

Unfortunately, this turned out to be boring RANCID meets BRYAN ADAMS type crap with lame ass harmonies that all too many

groups hoping to be the "next big thing" are doing these days. Is this supposed to be punk? I hope not, because it's way too soft and wimpy-sounding for me. (CLL)
(TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)



SLOPPY MEATEATERS

"Forbidden Meat" CD

Fuck me. How can a band with such a shitty name sound so damn good!?

Think of a more raucous BLINK 182 duking it out

with a cleaner-produced DILLINGER 4, and you'll be somewhere close. Fifteen tracks are on this beauty, and pretty much every one is a winner. (RK)

(Orange Peel/PO box 15207/Fremont, CA 94539)

SNIX

"Archives, Volume 1" CD

SNIX were among the first wave of 80's French "skunk" bands, so I was naturally thrilled to find this. Alas, it contains only early demos and a 1984 live show instead of their singles, comp cuts, and studio LP. In other words, here you get a lo-fi taste of better things to come, which we can only hope will appear on forthcoming volumes from Vulture Rock. (And, while I'm on the subject, isn't it about time that someone re-released the fab material by the TROTSKIDS and other French groups on CD?) (JB)
(Vulture Rock/PO Box 40104/Albuquerque, NM 87196)

SOFT BOYS

"Underwater Moonlight" triple LP/double CD

The original version of this LP blew me away back in '83. Songs like "I Wanna Destroy You," "Queen Of Eyes", and "Kingdom Of Love" really warped my younger mind and set me on a course to seek out everything else by this band and their erstwhile singer/leader, Robyn Hitchcock. A classic neo-psych release from 1980 with an amazing package, fantastic sound, the entire original LP, and a ton of bonus tracks. (AW) (MCA)

SOLEDAD BROTHERS

s/t CD

I've had a thing for two-man groups lately: the IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS, BANTAM ROOSTER, the UPHOLSTERERS, the WHITE STRIPES, and now the SOLEDAD BROTHERS. Bluesy, punky, and rockin', these guys are trashed-out maniacs doing tunes like "What Hath God Wrought", "Cadillac Hips", and "Do The Heartstopper". The cover art is also totally boss. (AW)
(Estrus/PO Box 2126/Bellingham, WA/98227)

SON OF SAM

"Songs From The Earth" CD

The forces of darkness collide on this disk, as we see A.F.I.'s Davey Havok front a band composed of members of SAMHAIN, DANZIG, and TIGER ARMY. Glenn Danzig himself even appears on a few songs. "Songs From The Earth" contains a collection of brutal, eerie rock songs that will have any fan of the aforementioned bands shitting their leather pants in excitement. (MC)
(www.nitrorecords.com)

SOUTHPORT

"Nothing Is Easy" CD

Simon from SNUFF with another side project, so you know the quality is assured. Fans of said band, other side projects such as GUNS N' WANKERS, or afficianodos of power-pop and the layered guitar sound a la the PROFESSIONALS will already know what to expect. Either way, you're in for a treat. (RK)
(Go-Kart/PO Box 20, Princes Street Station/New York, NY 10012)



SPEED QUEENS

"Speed Queen" CD

This record is on Sympathy, a label that I love, and it was produced by Tim Kerr, who I think is amazing. So I'm sorry to say that it is

filled with weak, out of tune, poorly-played crap. I really wanted to like it, but Sympathy has at least 500 more records to chose from that are better. (JC)
(Sympathy For The Record Industry)



SPITVALVES

"Fine Print At The Bottom" CD

How many more cliched, bland punk/ska bands can the worldHandle?

SPITVALVE do nothing, except make me head for the trade-in counter at the CD store. Although they thank God, I

REVIEWS

suspect a place in heaven might be lacking for the perpetrators of this musical abomination. (RK)
(Resurrection AD/PO Box 763/Red Bank, NJ 07701)

STALK-FORREST GROUP

"St. Cecilia: The Elektra Recordings" CD

These guys were BLUE OYSTER CULT before the name change, and they recorded these songs circa 1969/70. A few bootlegs of this material have since surfaced, but this is the first time it's been released from the master tapes. B.O.C. fans may be surprised to discover just how psychedelic these guys were in the early days, though it's not too far removed from their first album. (AW) (Rhino)
Handmade/www.rhinohandmade.com)



STAMPING GROUND

"Carved From Empty Words" CD

I once saw some video footage of a bunch of bricks falling from a roof and crushing an old lady

on the street below. This album reminded me of that. If the metal holocaust of bands like ALL OUT WAR are your ammunition, this album should be one of the bullets in your rifle. (STM)
(Thorpe/PO Box 2007/Upper Darby, PA 19082)

STILETTO BOYS

"Buzzbomb Sounds" CD

The STILETTO BOYS really set themselves apart from the '77-inspired pack with really poppy vocal harmonies. The songs almost have a BUZZCOCKS feel to them, so any pop-punk fan should be knocked out by this. Why aren't they more popular? (MC)
(High Society International/St. Petersburg Str. 4/18107 Rostok/GERMANY)

STILETTOS

"Damn! Baby! Pussy! Yeah!" 10"

Ten songs worth of NEW BOMB TURKS worship. Normally, that alone would be enough for me to dig it, but the vocals really fuck things up. It might be the recording, but the vocals really take away from an otherwise good record. I'll pass on this one. (MC)
(www.stilettoes.nl)

SHITLIST

STUNTMEN

"Small Time" CD

Excellent punk rock from Philly's finest. The Stuntmen have an interesting sound, mixing the REPLACEMENTS with the HUMBERS. It works really well for them, since there are lots of great riffs and songwriting. "Hurry Up and Wait" even reminded me of THE LAZY COWGIRLS. (MC)

(Steel Cage/PO Box 29247/Philadelphia, PA 19125)



SUPERHELICOPTER LTD.

"Twisted Baby/Got You Baby" 7"

This 7" is a total trash rocker. Breakneck punk rock with buzzsaw guitars and trashcan production.

"Twisted Baby" is a non-stop shot to the jugular, while "Got You Baby" relies on short guitar bursts. (MC)

(High School Refuse/Berlaneweg 12/9731 LN Groningen/HOLLAND)

SWEET

"Sweet Fanny Adams"/"Desolation Boulevard" CD

For those familiar only with the U.S. version of "Desolation Boulevard", it should be noted that the U.S. version was actually a butchered version of two previous U.K. albums, with their recent hits like "Ballroom Blitz" tossed on. Both albums have been remastered and reissued by BMG Europe. Because the U.S. album was made to reflect their hits, some of their best songs were left off of it, including songs like "Rebel Rouser", "Turn It Down", and "Solid Gold Brass". What more do you need? (AW)

(BMG/http://www.bmg.de)

SUICIDE COMMANDOS

"Commit Suicide Dance Concert" CD

Garage d'Or (great pun name!) is a newish Minneapolis label reissuing rare late 70's/early 80's punk, and this is an expanded version of the COMMANDOS' second and last LP, a rip-roaring live set. Half of it consists of high-speed covers of 60's punk songs, interspersed with their own frenetic originals. 32 songs in all! (AW)

(Garage d'Or/www.garagedor.com)

SURVIVORS

"Where Did We Go Wrong?" CD

This band seems to be pretty young and kind of sounds like early A.F.I., back when they

were a punk band. Basically, the SURVIVORS play East Coast melodic political punk rock with a bit of that new school sound. Pretty good. (CLL)

(Squigtone/PO Box 38/Newton, NJ 07860)



SWELL MAPS

"Sweep The Desert" CD

Another cool collection of MAPS tracks from Alive records. This one concentrates more on the instrumental, noisy, and

experimental side of the band. Good mood music. Overall, I greatly prefer the more structured "International Rescue" release. (JC)

(Alive/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)

SWORN VENGEANCE

"Domination" CD

If you grew up with SLAYER and MORBID ANGEL, but have come to appreciate some of the heavier hardcore bands, you'll probably like this album. The music is absolutely crushing and structured for supreme aural annihilation, but the lyrics teeter on the theatrical and histrionic with songs about fire, hell, demons, and more fire. That aside, you mosh metal maniacs will thank your dark overlords for this album. (STM)

(breakoutrec@hotmail.com)



SYLVAIN SYLVAIN & THE CRIMINALS

"Bowery Butterflies ('78 Vintage NYC Rock and Roll Gems)" CD

After the NEW YORK DOLLS went tits up,

SYLVAIN recorded a series of demos with monies received from various legal scams. These are those demos, which led him to a deal with RCA in 1979. If you're familiar with "The Kids are Back" single, you know what to expect here: fun-filled upbeat little songs with piano everywhere. (X)

(Munster/PO Box 18107/28080 Madrid/SPAIN)

TEMPLARS

"The Horns of Hattin" CD

The TEMPLARS' recordings just keep getting better and better. This trio cranks out great Oi!/streetrock with excellent lyrics and super-gruff vocals. The first tune is some sort of noise/soundbite collage that goes on a bit too long, but then it's straight into catchy numbers like "Video Age", "H Street", and "Consequences". There's even some acoustic guitar flavoring. (AW)

(GMM/PO Box 15234/Atlanta, GA 30333)

THISYEARSMODEL

"Wanted: New Best Friends" CD

Fans of FRODUS/UNIVERSAL ORDER OF ARMAGEDDON-type craziness should enjoy this one. These songs run pretty short and are all very tight, which adds to the intensity of this record. There's nothing very ground-breaking here, but why does it have to be ground-breaking to be good? (cj)



THREE BELOW

"Inside" CD

Beatdown hardcore with lighting fast riffage and growling vocals, punctuated at times with "earnest signing".

BIOHAZARD comes to mind. I fear that this veers a bit too close to an Ozzfest-type band, but it's still a tight, intense album. (STM)

(threebelow1@aol.com)

THREE YEARS DOWN

"Snake's Bite" CD

This totally rocks! 3YD has done nothing but get better and hone their craft further with every release. If the SUPERSUCKERS divorced the devil, THREE YEARS DOWN would be right there collecting alimony. The band's got plans to tour, so spread the word! Skulls to ya! (X)

(www.3yearsdown.com)



THRICE

"Identity Crisis" CD

I'm not sure if these guys have an identity crisis or simply a severe theological quandry, but they do thank God for creating music.

Surely, though, even God doesn't want to hear thousands of melodic hardcore bands. And isn't it just a little ironic that they thank a bunch of heathens like DILLINGER 4? (RK)

(Sub City/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)



TIP TOPPERS

"Dance With Me" 7" EP

A fine chunk of power pop from Norway. The credits say Gressvic 2001, but this could easily be Boston 1978. Big sharp hooks and

stripped down playing, and a pretty hilarious back cover photo montage. (JC)

(Sneakers/Almgrensv. 9a/1621 Gressvic/NORWAY)

REVIEWS



TOMMY & THE TERRORS
"Mass. Hysteria" CD
 This band has great hooks left and right that will knock you on your ass. They keep up a pretty steady, fast-paced punk/Oi

mix with a rocking '77-82 flavor. Great old school Boston-meets-English-style punk rock! Fuck, yeah! (CLL)
 (Rodent Popsicle/PO Box 1143/Allston, MA 02134)

TOTAL VERLEPT

"Totally Wasted" CD

Twisted and thrashy punk rock from the Netherlands. Sometimes it's over the top and sometimes it's a bit restrained, so that it makes TOTAL VERLEPT a little creepy-sounding. Interesting and worth checking out. (JC)

(Tocado/PO Box 3092/3003 AB Rotterdam/HOLLAND)

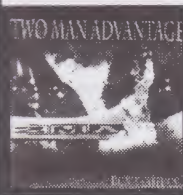


THE TRANS MEGETTI
"Fading Left To Completely On" CD

This is my first exposure to the TRANS MEGETTI, who I had heard some good things about. Their sound

is similar to DRIVE LIKE JEHU, only not as screamy and maybe a little more manic musically. I normally don't go for much stuff like this, but this CD rocks. Recommended. (MC)

(Gern Blandsten/PO Box 356/River Edge, NJ 07661)



TWO MAN ADVANTAGE
"Don't Label Us" CD

I'll try not to label them, but at the outset TWO MAN ADVANTAGE definitely have a fast hard-as-fuck hardcore sound which is

kind of like a punch in the face. Then they get a bit melodic with another vocalist, and almost start to lose it at times. Even so, the switch-off singing keeps almost every song blasting along. (CLL)

(Go-Kart/PO Box Prince Street/New York, N.Y. 10012)



TYLER KEITH & THE PREACHER'S KIDS
"Romeo Hood" CD

Out of the ashes of the NECKBONES, TYLER KEITH and his band of rockers come at you like nobody's business. This is an amazing straight

rock'n'roll record that'll have you clappin', jumpin', and possibly fuckin' all night long. I'm under 30 and I like this, so fuck right the hell off. (MC)
 (Black Dog/Route 1 Box 163-A/Monticello, MS 39654)



UPHOLSTERERS
"Makers of High Grade Suites" 7" EP

Jack White can do no wrong. The UPHOLSTERERS are another two-piece

blues/rock outfit, sounding exactly like the WHITE STRIPES. The three songs on this release are all fantastic, especially "Pain (Gimme Sympathy)". Comes with an insert about upholstery. Essential. (MC)
 (www.sympathyrecords.com)

U.S.BOMBS

"Back at the Laundomat" CD

It's the new U.S. BOMBS, but it's as raw, aggressive, and as catchy as ever. You're hit right over the head from the start with the anthemic "Tora, Tora, Tora", and the rest rocks hard as well. This CD, like the band itself, is a punk rock call to arms that Jimmy Pursy himself would be proud of. (JC)

(Hellcat/2798 Sunset Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90026)



V.REVERSE
"Now/Then: The Complete Recordings" CD

Not great, not terrible. It's like a bar rock band's interpretation of DC hardcore. Post-hardcore? I

don't know. A lot of potential, but it falls short of the glory. (STM)
 (Arms Reach/1624 Columbus Avenue #1S/Chicago, IL 60626)



VALVE
"Missionary" CD

Though there are some interesting song structures, they seem to simply sit there idly. While not bad, it all just left me

indifferent. With time, these kids could develop into something special. (STM)
 (www.sinkclub.com)

VANILLA MUFFINS

"The Power of Sugar Oi" CD

Switzerland's VANILLA MUFFINS are something of an anomaly. They play super pop-oriented punk with heavy guitars and Oi-

style choruses, i.e., "sugar oi", which turns out to be a very appealing combination. One might think that the more lunkheaded segments of the skinhead audience wouldn't approve, but luckily they too seem to enjoy jumping around and singing along. This CD contains material from all of the band's 7" releases, most of them out-of-print, and is therefore most welcome. (JB)
 (Reality Clash/PO Box 491/Dana Point, CA 92629)



VARUKERS
"The Retch Files" CD

This is a CD reissue of two VARUKERS LPs, "One Struggle, One Fight" and "Live in Leeds 1984". The sound quality is pretty low,

but it's classic Britpunk stuff. The back cover pic is filled with blood and guts: it looks like a bomb exploded and killed a bunch of people, one of whom is hanging over a railing with a huge hole in his back. (CLL)

(Retch/49 Rose Crescent/Woodvale, Southport/Merseyside PR8 3RZ/ENGLAND)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Another Year On The Streets" CD

The latest label sampler from Vagrant. If previously unreleased tracks from the likes of the GET UP KIDS, FACE TO FACE, SAVES THE DAY, new signings ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT, ALKALINE TRIO, NO MOTIV, AUTOMATIC 7, and the GOTOHELLS sound good to you, this probably will to. Me, I've always thought they were one of the more class labels around, but such feelings are purely subjective. (RK)

(Vagrant/2118 Wilshire Blvd #361/Santa Monica, CA 90403)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Black Eyes and Broken Bottles, Vol. II: Punks Revenge" CD

This is a really good compilation from Beer City, 17 bands in all I'd like to mention all the bands, because every single one has their own fantastic style of punk, crust, and hardcore, but I only have the space to single out a few: PENALTY BOX, VERY METAL, BORIS THE SPRINKLER, ACTIVE INGREDIENTS, DESPITE, PRONOUNCED DEAD, FEED THE MACHINE, and the U.S. BOMBS. (CLL)
 (Beer City/PO Box 26035/Milwaukee, WI 53226)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

SHITLIST

A compilation of bands from Berkeley High. The punker content consists largely of (previously released) tracks from alumni PINHEAD GUNPOWDER, ENGINE 88, and FANG. The current high school acts run the typical gamut - some reasonably well played rock, ska, reggae, hip-hop and DJ stuff. I can't imagine this appealing to many who don't know someone on the record. (RK)
(El Sabado)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Boston Massacre: Four 7" EPs" CD

This is a CD reissue of four previously released 7"ers. It starts off with "Boston's Finest" - TOXIC NARCOTIC - playing their brand of brutal Boston hardcore, and continues on with chaotic streetpunk numbers from the UNSEEN, great political punk from A GLOBAL THREAT, and some fast and pissed-off songs by the STATISTICS. But A POOR EXCUSE win the award for best band on this CD, with a sound that's a cross between early AGNOSTIC FRONT and MINOR THREAT. (CLL)
(Rodent Popsicle/PO Box 1143/Allston, MA 02134)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Boston Punk 1000" CD

A killer compilation with lots of different variations of crust, power violence, singalong hardcore, Oi, and

just straight-up punk. 23 killer bands, including TOXIC NARCOTIC, A GLOBAL THREAT, the STATISTICS, CLASS ACTION, AUGUST SPIES, and the SHORT LIVED. There's not one dead song, just total mayhem. (CLL)
(Rodent Popsicle/PO Box 1143/Allston, MA 02134)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Copenhagen Beat" CD

Although not nearly as impressive as beat compilations from certain other European countries, as it lacks the guitar crunch of the Swedish bands on "Searchin' for Shakes" or the haunting melodies found on "Dutch Beat Explosion", this 29-song Danish beat collection nevertheless contains some appealingly garagey beat numbers. The best of the bunch are probably "Walking Down the Street" by the HEATERS, "When I Walked" by the RAWES, "I'm Looking For" by JOHN INGLIS, "Little Zula" by the SWINGING FIVE, "Where-Where" by the TELSTARS, "Coming On

Strong" by the BEATMAKERS, and "Anytime" by the METEORS. (JB)
(Hit'n'Beat, no address listed)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Drunk on Rock, Vol. 2" CD

An excellent CD compilation showcasing a few of my current faves. You get tracks by the CLONE DEFECTS, the BELLRAYS,

the PIRANHAS, the MUD CITY MANGLERS, and many more. 26 bands in all, and most of the songs appear to be exclusive. Worth it for THE CLONE DEFECTS track alone. (MC)
(I-94 Recordings/PO Box 44763/Detroit, MI 48244)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Fuzz, Flakes & Shakes, Vols. 4 & 5" CDs

Two more hot comps of primo garage rock, folk rock, and psychedelic sounds. There's too much stuff here to go into detail, but suffice to say that Tony Sanchez does a great job with these: great sound, good liners and pics, etc. A few of my faves include the BAM RIGG SET, TROJANS OF EVOL, BLUES COMPANY, MENACES, NOBLEMEN, SONS OF ADAM, and the LYRICS. (AW)
(Dionysus/www.dionysusrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Garageland #4 "Cheap Guitars and Cheaper Fun" CD

I seem to have received this way cool package of punk rock because of my rave review for the 3D'S, who were a fucking fantastic band. The compilation has two killer cuts by them, as well as a whole bucketfull of great tracks from SHOOT 'EM DOWN, the BITTER PILLS, the RUNAROUNDS, SUCKERPUNCH, LOS MUERTOS and UBANGI STOMP, all of which excel in the art of trashy r'n'r. The CD comes with Garageland magazine #4. (JC)
(Garageland/1219 McKinley Avenue/Huntsville, AL 35801)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Greasers, Punks, & Skins #2" CD

This is a good mix of balls-out punk, rockabilly, and lots of Oi, Oi, Oi music! SQUIGGY starts this one off

with a great in-your-face track about total hatred for everything and everyone. There are 28 different bands from all over the world on this compilation, including SLAP N' THE CATS, the INSUBORDINATES, HEADWOUND, the WRETCHED ONES, the OUTSIDERS, A.P.A., and G.O.H. The way it should be done.

(CLL)
(Squigstone/PO Box 38/Newton, NJ 07860)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"H.E.A.R. This" CD

A compilation benefitting Hearing Education and Awareness for Rockers - a fine cause, hopefully close to anyone's heart (and head) who is reading this. 29 tracks, lots of 70s bands - the LEWD, AVENGERS, MARY MONDAY & HER BITCHES, the VKTMS etc - along with a bunch of contemporary acts - SCARED OF CHAKA, TEXAS TERRI, SHONEN KNIFE, TEDIO BOYS, WHITE TRASH DEBUTANTES, JON COUGAR CONCENTRATION CAMP, and more. The utter worthiness of the cause should overcome any lingering doubts about the patchiness of the music herein. (RK)
(Sub City/PO box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Joe Dirt" Soundtrack CD

A pointless collection of dumb ass classic rock for the soundtrack of an equally insipid-looking movie. Even the best songs are mainstream and easily found all over the radio, and they even ruin the opportunity of featuring a great band like CHEAP TRICK by selecting a totally weak 80's track from them. (JC)
(Sony)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Legend City" LP/CD

A surprisingly good collection of Phoenix-area garage bands from the mid-60s, ranging from the rockabilly-to-Merseybeat sounds of the DOOR NOBS to the YARDBIRDS-inspired rave-ups and psych-punk of the HOBBIT to the garagey folk of the WILD FLOWERS and SOLID GROUND to the fuzzed-out punk of DESTINY'S CHILDREN and the HEARSEMEN. I say "surprisingly" because it's easy to assume that virtually everything good from the 60's vaults has already been reissued. But keep in mind that there were dozens of 60's underground records for every 70's punk release, and on this album Lee Joseph has unearthed several more nuggets. (JB)
(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"Midnight Special At Screen On The Green" double CD

The BUZZCOCKS, SEX PISTOLS and CLASH all caught live at an August 1976 show. It's a decent recording, and a chance to hear these bands at their earliest in a live setting, i.e., when the BUZZCOCKS were still fronted by Howard Devoto, the PISTOLS still featured a bassist who could play, and the CLASH were

a five-piece with early guitarist KEITH LEVENE. All three bands put on a great show, and the PISTOLS were on fire. (AW) (Punk Vault, no address listed)



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"The Mod Scene" CD

This volume in the Decca reissue series should have been entitled "The Awful White-Boy Soul Scene", since it contains no guitar-heavy Modbeat at all. Fans of the WHO and CREATION will gag over this fashion-conscious gaggle of wannabe soul trippers, with their phony "black" vocals, brass and piano accompaniment, and dance-oriented yawners. Not even the presence of otherwise fine bands like the POETS (not their best song) and the ATTACK (one of their worst) can salvage this turkey. (JB) (Deram/Decca)



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"No-Fi Trash: A Floppy Cow Records Compilation" CD

There are a few unreleased tracks here from the likes of LATRINES, ANNIVERSARY, GAMITS, and USELESS ID, but it is the staggering scope and inclusivity of the 28 tracks herein which will amaze and make it a keeper. It's a virtual who's who of the melodic hardcore, emo, and pop that's making the rounds these days - TUGBOAT ANNIE, NEW FOUND GLORY, HOT WATER MUSIC, NO MOTIV, BOMBSHELL ROCKS, GET UP KIDS, DEATH BY STEREO, NO FUN AT ALL, PROMISE RING, etc. What a great CD. (RK) (Floppy Cow Records/exclusively distributed by Suburban Home/www.suburbanhomerecords.com)



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Not So Quiet On The Coldfront" CD

I know that Brett is a honcho at *Hit List*, so I could be accused of nepotism and favoritism. Even so, not only is this one of the best album titles of the year, but the quality on these 28 tracks is high and dauntingly consistent. The bands largely speak for themselves - DIVIT, PLUS ONES, MORAL CRUX, ALL SYSTEMS GO, HORACE PINKER, WYNONA RIDERS, HAGFISH, AMERICAN HEARTBREAK, TRAVOLTAS, ODD NUMBERS and more. A stellar compilation from one of the best labels out there today. (RK) (Coldfront/PO Box 8345/Berkeley, CA 94707)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Scarey Business" CD

An excellent compilation of obscure 60's punky and folky garage music originally released by three underground SoCal labels. Not all 30 tracks are first-rate, but a surprising number of them are, including songs by the (pre-CLEAR LIGHT) BRAIN TRAIN, the NEW BREED, the WOOLY ONES, BUD & KATHY, the ELECTRIC COMPANY, and the CHEVELLE FIVE. The remainder are also pretty good, making this one of the stronger entries in the "Nuggets from the Golden State" series. (JB) (Big Beat/42-50 Steele Road/London NW10 7AS/ENGLAND)



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Socially Transparent Disease" CD

A decent sampler compilation from Transparent Records. The majority of the featured bands suffer from serious CANDY SNATCHERS envy, but you get standout tracks by the DIRTYS, HARD LIQUORS, and the GERIATRIX, who all rock. Those three tracks, which are also available on singles, alone make the comp worth checking out. (MC) (Transparent/6759 Transparent Drive/Clarkston, MI 48346)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Sympathetic Sounds Of Detroit" CD

Jack White recorded all the bands on here at his studio, so there's a real cohesiveness in sound. It also helps that a lot of the bands mine similar territory: rockin' garage punk that reeks of Detroit. The contributions come from the PAYBACKS, DIRTBOMBS, COME ONS, SOLEDAD BROS., VON BRODIES, HENCHMEN, K.O. & THE KNOCKOUTS, BUZZARDS, DETROIT COBRAS, BANTAM ROOSTER, and WHITE STRIPES. (AW) (Sympathy For The Record Industry/www.sympathy.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Terror Firmer: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack" CD

I have actually seen this film, and it was not bad. I don't remember all these bands being on the soundtrack, but you get 23 allstars playing along - LUNACHICKS, LESS THAN JAKE, NOFX, MELVINS, ANTI-FLAG, ALL, GWAR, VANDALS, DOWN BY LAW, TOILET BOYS, DOC HOPPER, GIRLS AGAINST BOYS, SOUTHPORT, BOUNCING SOULS, and more. Not bad at all. (RK) (Go Kart/PO Box 20, Prince Street Station/New York, NY 10012)

REVIEWS



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"That Darn Punk" CD

An original motion picture soundtrack. I haven't seen the original motion picture, and most of the tracks on here aren't that original either (i.e., they've appeared on records before). If you like your hardcore melodic, and are fond of Kung Fu bands, I'm sure you'll want to pick up these 18 tracks - NERF HERDER, RANCID, ATARIS, AFI, NO MOTIV, VANDALS, JOSH FREEZE, LAGWAGON, and more do the honors. (RK) (Kung Fu/PO Box 3061/Seal Beach, CA 90740)



VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Too Legit For The Pit" CD

Yes, these are hardcore bands covering classic hip-hop songs. No, this isn't the ridiculous rap-metal nonsense being prostituted on MTV these days. CANDIRIA, the HOODS, and BAD LUCK 13 are just a few of the bands that turn these old school rap tracks into awesome hardcore anthems. This comp is certainly impressive, but it may only be appreciated by us hardcore kids who grew up with these hip-hop songs. (STM) (info@radicalrecords.com)



VARUKERS
"How Do You Sleep" CD

Well, these hoary old tossers helped write the book on charged political raging hardcore, and this new disc from the newly-reformed troops pretty much picks up from where they left off in the mid-80s. Metal-tinged thrash, patented by the likes of G.B.H., DISCHARGE, BROKEN BONES, and, well...the VARUKERS! This actually sounds a lot better than I remember them. (RK) (Go Kart/PO Box 20, Prince Street Station/New York, NY 10012)



VERY METAL
"Life's Too Short" CD

Don't be fooled by the name. VERY METAL are from St. Louis and have been around since the mid-90s. In their early days they were known for being a very drunk, obnoxious punk band, and their latest effort retains the same attitude and is very tight

SHITLIST

and well-produced. One of their best releases, and it's on one of the best punk rock labels around. (CLL)
(Beer City/PO Box 26035/Milwaukee, WI 53226)



VIETNAM

"Strictly The Real" CD

If MADBALL had a "little brother band," this would be it. Hardcore for the sake of hardcore, without pretentiousness or regard

for what trend is selling the best right now. This really is East Coast hardcore in its rawest form, so fans of DISTRICT 9, CROWN OF THORNZ, and the aforementioned MADBALL should own this. (STM)
(Uprising/PO Box 1096/New York, NY 10003)

VIOLENT PLAYGROUND

"The Great Die Young" 10" EP

UK pop/punk with female vocals. They have a bit of an arty bite to them, and the guitar sound reminded me a lot of BRATMOBILE. I didn't find this too appealing, but I think the Kill Rock Stars and K Records crowd could get into it. (MC)
(Backwater/www.backwater-uk.net)



VOID CONTROL

"Voices From The Void" CD

This band has that early Orange County punk sound. They remind me a lot of T.S.O.L. or D.I. It's

pretty basic melodic-style punk, and despite the awful "Razor Baby" it turned out to be a really good release. (CLL)
(Squigtone/PO Box 38/Newton, NJ 07860)

WARSAW PAKT

"Needle Time" CD

This CD has great packaging, coming in a fake mailer with stamps and stickers all over it; inside is the info booklet and the CD. The presence of Andy Colquhoun (of PINK FAIRIES/WAYNE KRAMER BAND fame) and LUCAS FOX, the first drummer of MOTÖRHEAD, might give you an indication of their sound: rough, punkish streetrock as only those Brits could do. (AW)
(Capt. Trip/www.md.xaxon.ne.jp/~cptrip)

WEAKERTHANS

"Watermark" CD EP



Three tracks that say more than most double-CD retrospectives ever could. Yup, it is the hit off the second LP, but it's more than worth it for the two unreleased live tracks.

Fans of their more laid-back, semi-acoustic side will go apeshit over these. File between essential and mandatory. (RK)
(Sub City/PO Box 7495 /Van Nuys, CA 91049)

WHERE FEAR AND WEAPONS MEET

"Unstoppable" CD

I hate promo copies with no lyrics, artwork, etc. The music is catchy, but still rough around the edges (in a good way), so I think ONE4ONE is a decent comparison. Loud and proud anthems played fast and furious. (STM)
(Triple Crown/331 W. 57th, PMB 472/New York, NY 10019)

WHITE STRIPES

"Party Of Special Things To Do" 7" EP

This is a Sub Pop singles club release featuring Detroit's brother-sister duo the WHITE STRIPES, who pay homage to CAPTAIN BEEFHEART with covers of three of his songs. It includes a great version of the title track, and both "China Pig" and "Ashtray Heart" rock as well. (AW)
(Sub Pop/www.subpop.com)



WHITE STRIPES

"Lord, Send Me an Angel/You're Pretty Good Looking (remix)" 7"

The WHITE STRIPES are my current favorite band. On this release, we get Jack

and Meg doing a fantastic job with some BLIND WILLIE MCTELL material on the A-side, while the flip is the "Trendy American Remix" of "You're Pretty Good Looking", which is pretty funny. Believe the hype, they are that good. (MC)
(www.sympathyrecords.com)

WOOLWORTHY

"Blasted Into Ashes" CD EP

With this more recent release, WOOLWORTHY have a more polished and radio-friendly sound. The songs still have great hooks and a slight power-pop feel, but I think I prefer the "Sweet Second Place" CD over this. (MC)
(Boss Tuneage/PO Box 19550/London SW11 1FG/ENGLAND)



WOOLWORTHY

"Sweet Second Place" CD

WOOLWORTHY play a nice blend of the current form of sensitive punk/pop with classic power-pop. This CD includes ten original tunes

and a great cover of "Starry Eyes" by the RECORDS. If you're tired of this emo-pop bullshit and want something with good hooks, you should seek this out. (MC)
(Woolworthy/1923 West Schiller #2F/Chicago, IL 60622)



ZEN GUERRILLA

"The Seeker/Half Step" 7"

This is an excellent rock and roll 7". They're like some super-heavy blues rock band from 1970, and this comes out sounding

like BLUE CHEER or "Live At Leeds" era-WHO (which is appropriate, given their cover of "The Seeker"). ZEN GUERRILLA, like the BELLRAYS, are really on the fucking money with this kind of stuff. (JC)
(Sub Pop/PO Box 20645/Seattle, WA 98102)

ZERO BULL SHIT

"A Moment Of Silence" CD

Big fat motherfuckers from Fremont, California. BAY AREA HARD CORE! About fucking time this band gets a CD out! They have been around since '93, they have released a couple demo tapes in the past, but nothing compares to this. I love the lyrics, because every single song has a major FUCK YOU and if you don't like it I'll kick your fucking ass attitude with excellent bass, guitar & hard as fuck drum beats. Fast fucking hardcore punk rock. Songs about hatred against cops, teachers, people that talk shit behind your back, drinking beer and having a "Bad Rap". Not one bad song one this. It just makes you wanting more or going out and beating the shit out of someone! This is not for the weak politically correct pussies. ZBS sing the fucking truth. People fucking suck! Dedicated to Kenny Simms, Circle B., & Brandon, R.I.P. "A moment of silence". (CLL)
(Try It Punk / P.O. Box 1561 / Fremont, CA 94538)

STEP SISTER

Cleveland Ohio HC



"They're following a twisted road music-wise: jagged guitars, lurching rhythms, dark lyrical content. I actually quite admire these boys!"

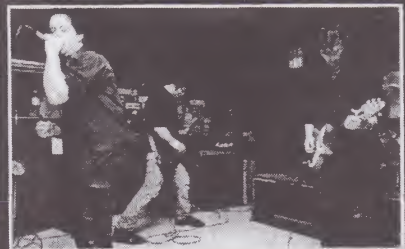
-MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #217

"...it's actually two records squeezed onto one disc...the first album has a visceral edge to it that suggests that the band isn't exaggerating when it bills itself as 'dark and twisted Cleveland Stoopgunk'...the second half of the disc kicks out greasy garage rock jams with all the sweaty fervor of Nashville Pussy or Mudhoney!"

- SCENE

"...the vocals sound like a rusted circular saw cutting through sheet metal and the guitars do a great job of sounding every bit as menacing...when Step Sister hit the gas pedal, they really hit it."

- BlankGeneration.com



Sugar Sweat 8-Track

STEP SISTER
Sugar Sweat 8-Track

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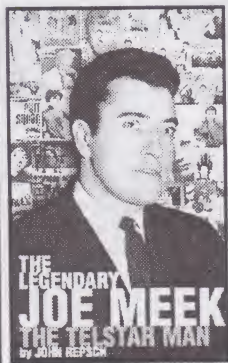
BOOK

The Legendary Joe Meek (The Telstar Man)

by Joe Repsch

(London: Cherry Red Books, 2000)

350 pages



UK's biggest stars were Cliff Richard and the Shadows. That was an era that would end with the British Invasion, and Joe Meek was to become overshadowed by the Beatles' producer George Martin.

Meek died at age 37 in sensational fashion on February 3rd, 1967, the anniversary of the death of his idol Buddy Holly, when he committed suicide after blowing away a neighbor woman with a shotgun at close range. The murder, which had no clear motive, was followed by Meek turning the weapon on himself. Meek has become an enormous cult figure since the original publication of this tome in 1989. It would seem his cult status arises mainly from the innumerable rock 'n' roll gems he helped create, although other factors are undoubtedly the bizarre circumstances in which he died — and those in which he lived.

This book attempts to reconstruct the events of Meek's life, both in order to demonstrate his remarkable talent and the manner in which he self-destructed despite having so much of it. Before he became England's first independent rock producer, Meek worked as a recording studio engineer who recorded mainly jazz records. His extreme temperament made it impossible for him to work within the system, especially the rigid system British studios had in the 1950s. After being fired for walking out in the middle of an orchestra's recording session following one of his frequent temper tantrums, Meek set up his own studio. Although his flat at 304 Holloway Road in North London was a rather unlikely location Meek, a studio whiz who managed to create truly other-worldly sounds, was able

to build a facility that got results as good as any British studio of the era. The locale soon became a magnet for would-be pop stars, who regularly arrived to queue up for auditions with Joe and their shot at three minutes of chart success. Little did some of these hopeful musicians realize that Joe was a mentally-disturbed nutter who might lose his temper and threaten them with his shotgun if they failed to play their parts correctly!

Although several of Meek's disks were fairly successful, especially the multi-million sellers, "Telstar" by the Tornados (which Joe also wrote) and the British Invasion classic, "Have I The Right" by the Honeycombs (whose boot-stomping beat owes something to the Dave Clark Five), overall his many brilliant records had nowhere near the success they deserved. The reason for this seems to bear a strong link to his ultimate murder-suicide. As an independent producer Meek had to find major labels to lease his masters, since the majors had a firm grip on the channels used to get records into stores. Meek's relations with labels were marginal and frequently tempestuous due to his paranoia and uncontrollable temper. (He was often as abusive to potential admirers as he was to philistine label executives: on one occasion he virulently cussed out Phil Spector on the phone and accused him of stealing his studio techniques!) Hence his master recordings often engendered no interest from the labels to whom he was forced to shop his products, also in part because they already had in-house production engineers they were paying to produce hit records. On those occasions when his records were picked up for distribution but did not have the chart impact they should have, he firmly believed it was because he was an outsider who the majors wanted to see fail. Meek also entered into a number of business arrangements in order to get funding to continue the recording operations with which he had an almost total obsession. None of these business deals went well, leaving Meek in a chronically weak financial position. When his big break came with "Telstar", the biggest selling record in the world in

1962, a nuisance lawsuit tied up the bulk of the profits for the remainder of Joe's life. Probably more than anything else, those four years of struggling to try to find ways to pay creditors and keep the studio going, while the "Telstar" money was being held by the court pending settlement of the lawsuit, brought Joe Meek to the brink of suicide. Additionally, Joe's constant popping of uppers and downers to deal with his depression and paranoia only exacerbated those problems.

An epilogue in this new edition of the book updates the subject matter, and covers the growth of interest in Joe Meek since the book's original publication. An immense discography is also provided. If you're interested in hearing some of Joe Meek's innumerable brilliant productions, you might want to check out, "There's Something I've Got To Tell You" by Glenda Collins, "Child Bride" by Geoff Goddard, "Merry-go-round" by Gunilla Thorne, "Colour Slide" by the Honeycombs, "Ice Cream Man" by the Tornados, "It Matters Not" by Mark Douglas, "Andy" by Andy Cavell, "North Wind" by Houston Wells, or "Just Like Eddie" by Heinz, to name only a few. Plans are now in the works for a movie based on this book, which should make for a very interesting soundtrack.

-Mel Cheplowitz

In Search of Deep Throat: "The Greatest Political Mystery of Our Time"

by Leonard Garment,

(New York: Basic, 2000)

In an era in which felling the President can be parlayed into a seven-figure book deal and a signature line of designer handbags, it's no small miracle that Deep Throat, America's most-beloved whistleblower, has yet to cash in his chips. Undoubtedly, he could spend the rest of his days on the political talk-show circuit, fielding sycophantic, softball questions from Larry King (e.g. "Let me ask you this, sir. Which was it — your love for this country or your strong sense of morality that made you commit this great service for the people of the United States?"), bantering flirtatiously

with Cokie Roberts, and trading barbs with the corpse-like George F. Will. But here we are, nearly thirty years after Watergate, and Deep Throat's true identity remains, in the words of the Basic Books publicity department, "The Greatest Political Mystery of Our Time."

In *In Search of Deep Throat*, Leonard Garment — jazz musician turned Nixon lawyer turned author of several slightly self-aggrandizing books about his days as a jazz musician and Nixon lawyer — chronicles his quest to solve the mystery of Deep Throat once and for all. Garment began his search by poring over those passages in *All The President's Men* that offer biographical information, no matter how slight, about Deep Throat. Then, using his first-hand knowledge of the personalities of those who were privy to the type of information that Deep Throat dispensed to Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, he began to eliminate possible candidates. When deduction alone was not enough, Garment loosened the suspects' lips with rich food and expensive booze. Eventually, he eliminated all of the potential Deep Throats except for one: John Sears, former deputy counsel to President Nixon. (Note to the reader: This information is not a spoiler; Garment identifies Sears as Deep Throat on page 2 of the book.)

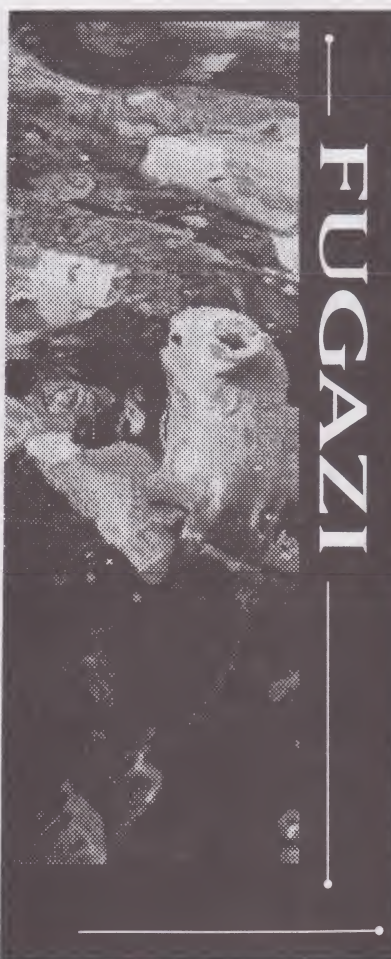
As Deep Throat theories go, Garment's is more credible than most. This may be damning him with faint praise — a recent, highly-publicized theory identifying Mark Felt as Deep Throat was based upon statements made at a summer camp in the 1980s by Carl Bernstein's then 8-year old son. Still, at times, Garment seems a bit short on objective evidence. One Deep Throat suspect, David Gergen, was eliminated because Garment could not picture him venturing into a parking garage late at night for clandestine meetings with Woodward. Another, Ken Clawson, was crossed off the list largely because Garment's wife, Suzanne, took one look at the presumably unbecoming Mrs. Clawson and declared "That's not Mrs. Deep Throat." Such conclusions can be fairly evaluated by old-time Washington "insiders" (who, to be fair,

probably constitute a sizable portion of Garment's target audience), but those of us who have not had the pleasure of meeting Messrs. Gergen or Clawson can do little but shrug and move on to his discussion of the next candidate. Therefore, it is unlikely that the average reader, upon completing *In Search of Deep Throat*, will consider this mystery solved.

Still in all, *In Search of Deep Throat* is a worthwhile read. Garment is a skilled writer with a good sense of humor, even when it comes to his own failings. One of the book's most entertaining passages details his delivery of an off-the-cuff speech summarizing an embryonic version of his theory to a packed house of drunken journalists and writers. Garment's description of the disastrous results is so vivid and unsparing that the reader is likely to find himself squirming. Better still are Garment's anecdotes concerning his time working at the White House. He tells of a puzzling conversation in which terminally-grumpy attorney general

John Mitchell said, apropos of nothing, "That fucking Colson is going to kill us all." Years later, Garment learned that that curious remark was made soon after Special Counsel to the President Chuck Colson had devised a plan to firebomb The Brookings Institution so that a group of Nixon lackeys disguised as firemen could enter the building and steal a set of the Pentagon Papers. Best of all, however, is the insight that Garment offers into the character of Richard Nixon. He writes that Nixon "was quite ready to deal with people who differed widely by ideology, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual preference, you name it. The readiness stopped abruptly when he received any sign that such people disliked him . . ." Sure, Nixon's insecurity may be old news, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a more eloquent and succinct description of it. And if you can write sentences like that, who really gives a fuck whether you know who Deep Throat is or not?

—J. Hunter Bennet



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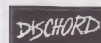
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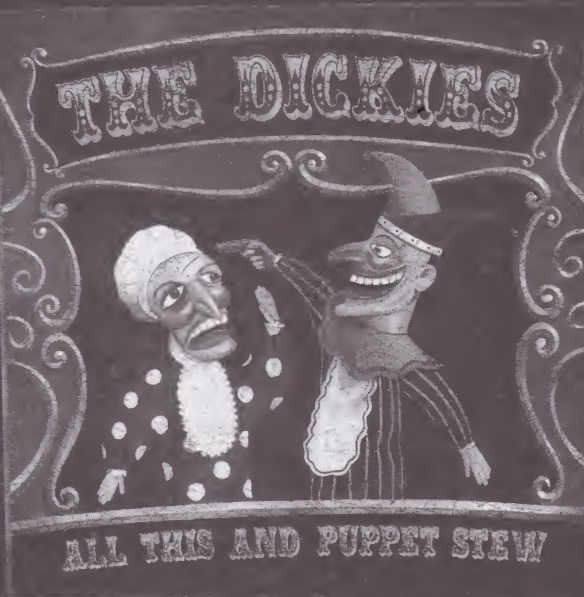
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